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7 Amusements

THE AMUSEMENTS OF
OLD LONDON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME THE FIRST



THE LONG ROOM AT BAGNIGGE WELLS, 1776

THE AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

BEING A SURVEY OF THE SPORTS AND PASTIMES
TEA GARDENS AND PARKS, PLAYHOUSES
AND OTHER DIVERSIONS OF THE PEOPLE
OF LONDON FROM THE 17TH TO
THE BEGINNING OF THE
19TH CENTURY

BY WILLIAM B. BOULTON

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS FROM CONTEMPORARY
SOURCES, ALL COLOURED BY HAND

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME THE FIRST

LONDON

JOHN C. NIMMO

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MDCCCCI

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THESE LITTLE ESSAYS
THE RESULT, IN PART, OF MANY HOURS OF
PLEASANT LABOUR IN HER COMPANY
I DEDICATE
WITH ALL AFFECTION TO
MY MOTHER

P R E F A C E

THIS work is an attempt to survey the amusements of Londoners during a period which began, approximately, with the Restoration of King Charles the Second and ended with the accession of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. These somewhat arbitrary boundaries of the subject were adopted for what seem to be sufficient reasons. In the almost complete absence of a periodical literature there is little record of the lighter moments of Londoners before the first of those great events; the era which began with the last inaugurated a revolution in social England which, among greater matters, transformed the nature of its amusements, and in so doing has suggested a natural limit to our subject. Anyone seeking conviction as to the completeness of that transformation has only to be reminded that athletics of all kinds have assumed the place they fill in modern life since the Queen came to the throne, and that of the organised amusements of Londoners during the period we have chosen for our

inquiry two only survive in a recognisable form to-day, the Play and the Social Club.

The amusements of Old London are only to be studied properly in the periodicals which record them, and in the lighter memoirs and letters of the times. The author has relied almost entirely upon these sources of information, but has made use of certain admirable collections of them dealing with particular subjects, all duly mentioned in the text.

WILLIAM B. BOULTON.

LONDON, *September* 1900.

CONTENTS

VOLUME THE FIRST

CHAPTER I

THE DIVERSIONS OF HOCKLEY IN THE HOLE, AND AT FIGG'S

Street processions for advertising Hockley in the Hole, 1—Nature of its entertainments, 1—The home of low caste sport, 2—Its bad notoriety, 2—People of condition as patrons, 3—Date of its establishment, 3—4—Its street processions condemned, 4—Bear and bull baiting, 5—7—Various accounts of bull-baiting, 7—9—Whipping a blindfolded bear, 10—Advertisement of 1710, 11—Tragedy with a bear, 11—Various advertisements, 12—13—Southwark Royal Bear Garden, 14—Marylebone Bear Garden, 15—Advertisement of Hockley in 1730, 16—The early prize-fight, 17—Challenges with swords, 18—19—Steele's account of an encounter with swords, 19—22—Captain John Godfrey cited on cuts with the sword and swordsmen, 23—26—Epitaph to a swordsman, 26—Greater respectability of Figg's establishment, 27—The proprietor, 27—28—Women boxers, 29—30—And women sword-fighters, 31—Long survival of such entertainments, 31—Natural visitations a cause of suppression, 32—Late continuance of bull and bear baiting, 32—33.

CHAPTER II

LONDON AL FRESCO—THE TEA GARDENS

Public love of open-air amusements and catering, 35—Long continuance of the custom, 36—Boundaries of Old London, 37—

Patrons of the *al fresco* entertainment, 38—Spring Garden, 39—40—Evelyn cited on it, 40—41—And Pepys, 42—The Mulberry Garden, 42—44—Spread of open-air entertainments under the Georges, 45—The springs and tea gardens of the northern heights, 46—Islington Spa, 47—Its prosperity, 48—Its end, 49—50—Discovery of the well in 1894, 50—Bagnigge Wells, 50—Its origin, 50—51—Description of the gardens, 51—52—Programme of the day, 52—53—Sunday at Bagnigge, 53—The poets of the day cited, 54—Shady characters, 55—Engravings of Bagnigge, 56—Marylebone Gardens, 57—Its attractions, 58—Its music, 59—60—Its advertisements, 60—61—Anecdote of Dick Turpin, 61—And of Doctor Johnson, 92—Other establishments, 63—The Clerkenwell Mulberry Gardens, 64—Perilous Pool, 65—St. Chad's Well, 66—Pancras Wells, 66—Adam and Eve Tea Garden, 66—White Conduit House, 66—67—Other establishments, 68—69—Origin of fives ball, 69—Belsize House, 69—70—Hampstead, 70—Attractions in South London, 71—Bad quality of their waters, 71—72—Cuper's Garden, 72—Finch's Grotto, 73—Bermondsey Spa Gardens, 74—Other establishments, 74—Chelsea Tea Gardens, 75—Reasons for the decline of the *al fresco* entertainment, 76—80.

CHAPTER III

THE MASKED ASSEMBLY

Speculations as to the origin and motives of the masquerade, 81—4—The mask formerly reserved to people of condition, 84—5—First masquerade in England, 86—Its slowness to come into vogue, 87—Queen Henrietta Maria's masque, 87—8—Masquerade at Charles the Second's Court, 89—Lady Muskerky hoaxed, 90—Bill for masquerading clothes, 91—Addison and Steele on the masquerade, 91—5—Agitation against it, 95—7—Heidegger, 98—His popularity, 99—100—Hoaxed by the Duke of Montagu, 102—4—Opposition to his masquerades, 104—7—Flourishing of the masquerade after his death, 108—Venetian Ball at the Haymarket, 108—The Jubilee masquerade at Ranelagh, 110—12—Further masquerades at Ranelagh, 112—13—Spread of the

CONTENTS

xi

fashion, 114-16—The Pantheon masquerade of 1772, 116-18—Popularity of the Pantheon masquerades, 118—Teresa Cornelys and the later masquerade, 119-21—Her great success, 122—Her patronage, 123—Some impersonations, 123-24—Cause of Madame Cornelys' failure, 125—Her end, 126-28.

CHAPTER IV

THE PLAY TABLES

Early and recent gambling, 129—High play formerly restricted to people of condition, 130—Public gaming at Court, 131-33—At the Coffee-houses, 134—The game of hazard, 134-36—Losses at White's Club, 136-37—Twelfth Night play at Court, 137—Fashionable craze for gambling, 138—Methods of cheating, 139-40—Frenzy of losers, 141—Introduction of whist, 142—Its popularity among the masses, 142—Methods of cheating at whist, 142-43—Anecdote of the Tyger, 143—Gaming at Court banished by George III., 144—Almack's Club opened, 144—Plunging at the new club, 145—Charles James Fox as a gambler, 145-47—Other frequenters of the club, 146—Hazard among the lower classes, 148—Introduction of faro, 149—Description of the game, 149-50—Faro at Brooks's Club, 151—And in the drawing-rooms, 152—Its vogue killed by a scandal, 153-54—The game of E. O. or roly poly, 155—Spread of gaming-houses, 156-60—William Crockford, 160-61—Crockford's Club opened, 162—Its exclusive clientèle, 162-63—French hazard, 163—Losses at Crockford's, 164-65—Extinction of the club, 166—Great gaming scandal, 167-69.

CHAPTER V

THE COCKPIT

Cock-fighting revived by Charles the Second, 171—Its suppression in recent times, 171-72—Antiquity of the sport, 172-73—Pepys' description of a cock-fight, 174-75—Sites of cockpits, 176-78

—Advertisements of cock-fights, 179—The art of training cocks, 180-85—Matches, 185-88—The Long Main, 188—Short Main, 189—And Welch Main, 189—The Battle Royal, 190—Officials, 191—The stakes, 191-92—The fight, 192-95—The law of the fight, 195-96—Machrie's code of rules, 197—Hogarth's illustration of a cock match, 198-99—And Rowlandson's, 200—Records of the sport, 201—Patrons of the sport, 202-4—Opposition to cock-fighting, 204-6.

CHAPTER VI

THE PLAY AND THE OPERA

Fynes Moryson on national palliatives for grief, 207—English taste for the drama, 207—Freedom of the drama in Restoration times, 208—Patronage of Charles the Second, 208—The King's patent theatre at Drury Lane, 208-10—And the Duke of York's, 209-10—Women actors introduced, 209—Value of the contemporary diarists' observations, 209—Combination of the King's and the Duke's companies, 211—Social character of the Restoration theatre, 211—Its internal arrangement, 212—Prologues and epilogues, 213—Prices of admission, 214—Various classes of the audience, 215—Free admission, 215—Pepys' observations, 216—Presence of the king an attraction, 217—Rivalry of the king's favourites, 217-18—First appearance of women actors, 219-20—Orange sellers, 220—Pit seats and their occupants, 221—The vizard worn by ladies, 222—Sir Charles Sedley, 221-23—Various incidents of the playhouse, 223-25—Pepys' weakness for the play, 225—Public access to the stage, and its abuse, 226-27—In the ladies' dressing-rooms, 228—Regulations to prevent crushing, 228-29—Footmen employed to retain seats, 229—Gallery given over to them, 229—Steele and Addison on the audience, 230—Patching by ladies at the opera, 231—Audience in time of Queen Anne, 233—Nose pulling, 234—"The Trunkmaker in the upper gallery," 234-36—Queen Anne's edict against public access to stage, 236-37—Hogarth's scene from "The Beggars' Opera," 238—Success of this play and its nature, 238-40—Second edition of the play prohibited,

CONTENTS

xiii

240—Duchess of Queensberry and George the Second, 240-41
 —Duke of Montague's hoax, 242—Diversions of the theatre,
 244-45—The pit's rule, 245—Riots in the house, 245-46—
 Guard of soldiers introduced, 247—Anecdote of Mr. Garrick,
 247—Abuse of the gallery by the footmen, 247-48—Their
 ejection, 249—New theatres opened, 250—The Haymarket
 theatre, 250—Covent Garden, 251—Story of the closing of
 Lincoln's Inn theatre, 251—Opera in the Haymarket, 251-55
 —Addison and Steele cited, 252—Royal and noble patronage of
 the opera, 254—Lady Caroline Lennox's clandestine marriage,
 256—Growth of the rights of audiences, 257—Mr. Garrick and
 the audience, 258—Actors ruled by the house, 259—Instances
 of their defiance of it, 260—King George's patronage, 260—
 Stage jokes against the king, 261—The king fired at by Hat-
 field, 262—Garrick's farewell, 263—Love of sensations by
 audiences, 264—Abolition of patent theatres, 266—Temporary
 licences, 266-67—Old Price riots at Covent Garden, 267-68—
 Beau Brummell at the opera, 270—Social control of admittance
 to the opera, 270-71.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME THE FIRST

(Reproduced from Contemporary Engravings and Coloured by Hand)

<i>The Long Room at Bagnigge Wells, 1776</i>	. . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
<i>Bull-Baiting</i>		<i>To face page xvi</i>
<i>Drawn by H. ALKEN.</i>		
<i>Bear-Baiting</i>		32
<i>Drawn by H. ALKEN.</i>		
<i>The Royal Masquerade, Somerset House</i>	. . .	80
<i>Drawn by WILLIAM HOGARTH.</i>		
<i>A Kick-up at a Hazard-Table</i>	. . .	128
<i>Drawn by THOMAS ROWLANDSON.</i>		
<i>Cock-fighting</i>		176
<i>Drawn by H. ALKEN.</i>		
<i>Interior of Sadler's Wells Theatre</i>	. . .	208

BULL-BAITING

DRAWN BY H. ALKEN



AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

CHAPTER I

THE DIVERSIONS OF HOCKLEY IN THE HOLE, AND AT FIGG'S

It was very usual during the early years of the eighteenth century to encounter in the streets of the city of London a band of men marching in a kind of military order to the beat of kettle-drums, with colours flying and drawn swords, and followed by a numerous retinue distributing handbills to passers-by. The handbills contained particulars of surprising entertainments to be enjoyed at Hockley in the Hole, an establishment of great renown which stood in what was afterwards Ray Street, Clerkenwell, a street which disappeared in some great scheme of municipal improvement about forty years ago. Hockley in the Hole was a kind of theatre or arena of the old type which originated in Elizabethan times, and provided accommodation for bull and bear baiting, dog-fights, and contests for prizes between gladiators

2 AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

armed with the sword or with cudgels or quarter-staffs, and such like entertainments. It was, indeed, the lineal successor of the Bear Garden at Bankside, and its earlier years were perhaps contemporary with the later of that famous institution. At the beginning of the last century Hockley was the headquarters of what, by later generations, was known as the "fancy," that is, the organisation of rather low caste sporting characters who devoted themselves to forms of sport not actually forbidden by the statute-book, but still more or less frowned upon by the respectable and law-abiding.

Hockley in the Hole was a tumble-down affair even in its prime. It was surrounded by ruinous houses inhabited by very shady characters; by low taverns and raffish institutions for the training of bull and fighting dogs, and the whole vicinage was subject to periodical overflowings of the adjacent Fleet ditch, upon whose banks indeed Hockley was built. It derived its name from a word meaning "a muddy field," and in no way belied the appellation. There was an atmosphere of blackguardism about the place and its entertainments from the first; there were, for example, rumours of dark passages to the banks of the Fleet for the convenience of gentry who attended its diversions and had particular reasons for avoiding constables and Bow Street officers. Years after Hockley had vanished, they dug up a valise marked "R. Turpin" in a house adjoining, together with a choice collection of skeleton keys, which you may

THE DIVERSIONS OF HOCKLEY 3

see figured very convincingly in Mr. Pinks' excellent "History of Clerkenwell." At the time we are considering, Hockley was the chosen home of the sports we have mentioned, and of other miscellaneous entertainments of a character vastly pleasing to the popular taste of that day, diversions which are happily to-day things of the past. But Hockley, with similar institutions at Tothill Fields, Westminster, at Saffron Hill, Clerkenwell, and later, at Marylebone, continued traditions of sport which had had a very considerable vogue under distinguished auspices in earlier times. In the days of William the Third and Anne, sporting butchers and low gamesters were the chief of their patrons, though people of condition appeared at intervals in the half-crown "pleasant cool gallery for gentlemen" hung with tattered tapestry. From these humble and disreputable entertainments emerged later, as we shall see, the great institution of the London Prize Ring, an institution which provided the national amusement of a century. In the early days of Anne and the first Georges, the diversions of Hockley filled a large place among the pleasures of the lower orders of Londoners, and it is very probable exercised a vast influence on their character.

Hockley itself provided a not inconsiderable amount of material for the annalists and social historians of those times, and was decidedly the chief of the group we have named. The exact date of its establishment is uncertain; it probably succeeded the Bear Garden in Bankside, which sur-

4 AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

vived from the reign of Elizabeth to that of William the Third. There is mention of "a newe Beare Garden" at or near Islington so early as 1641, which may or may not be an allusion to Hockley itself. But the first of its advertisements which have come down to us dates only from the last year of the seventeenth century, and in the following June the Grand Jury of Middlesex began to complain of the impudence of its professors, who distributed their handbills to the sound of drums, and in defiance of the king's trumpeter, who had the monopoly of street music in those times.

"We having observed," said the Grand Jury, "the late boldness of a sort of men that stile themselves masters of the noble science of self-defence passing through this city with beat of drums, colours displayed, and swords drawn, with a numerous company of people following them dispersing their printed bills, thereby inviting persons to be spectators of those inhuman sights, which are directly contrary to the practice and profession of the Christian religion, whereby barbarous principles are instilled in the minds of men; we think ourselves obliged to represent this matter, that some method may be speedily taken to prevent their passage through the city on so unwarrantable a design."

The exhibition which incurred these animadversions of the Grand Jury was the prize fight with swords, which we shall examine later, and was in reality a much more harmless affair than it seemed; but the

THE DIVERSIONS OF HOCKLEY 5

sportsmen were clearly breaking the law in the matter of the musical procession, and for the next few years they evaded the penalties of the magistrates by withdrawing the music. Advertisements thenceforward appeared at regular intervals in the *Postboy*, announcing their displays as "trials of skill," to take place at such an hour at "His Majesty's Bear Garden at Hockley in the Hole, without beat of drum." This assumption of a royal title was not without humour, and with the use of the words "vivat Rex" at the end of such announcements was no doubt a claim of Hockley to represent the tradition of the old Bear Garden of Queen Elizabeth at Bankside, then lately extinct. In any case, at the time we are considering, the place received such patronage as enabled it to rank as one of the chief amusements of the town for the next half century, and its strange contests between the "masters of the science of self defence," with sword and with fist, and its bull and bear baitings were noticed by half the essayists and satirical poets of the first two Georges as typical of the brutal tastes of Englishmen.

Bear-baiting, one of the chief diversions of Hockley, was, it is said, introduced into England in the reign of King John by a band of Italians, and exhibited to that monarch at Ashby-de-la-Zouch "for his Highness's amusement, wherewith he and his court were highly delighted." Fosbrooke, the antiquarian, records that in feudal days the bears were maintained, and their instructors paid, by a tax levied upon the peasantry, who were allowed free admission to the spectacle of

6 AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

the baiting. Bull-baiting, no doubt, came a little later, and both were in great vogue under the Tudors. Bear-wards, in the days of Elizabeth, were the appanages of great nobles, and the bears themselves were public characters. It was Slender, was it not, who had "seen Sackerson loose twenty times," or so he told Anne Page. The Queen herself was a great connoisseur in the sport; so much so, that she deprecated the competition of the playhouses, and issued orders from the Privy Council forbidding the acting of plays on Thursdays, the chosen day for the bear-baitings at Bankside. The Lord Mayor supported her Majesty with an injunction to the same effect, and gave reasons "that in divers places the players do use to recite their plays to the great hurt and destruction of the game of bear-baiting and such like pastimes which are maintained for her Majesty's pleasure." These were the palmy days of the sport; under the Stuarts it suffered a distinct loss of caste, and by the time Anne came to the throne both bear and bull baiting had declined into low forms of entertainment, much beloved of butchers and draymen, but still patronised more or less furtively at Hockley by persons of high station.

The particulars of those unedifying sports of bull and bear baiting were taken much for granted by the scribes of the last century, but there is much richness of detail to be gathered from earlier writers, details which changed little until the suppression of both amusements in quite modern times. Both bulls and

THE DIVERSIONS OF HOCKLEY 7

bears were chained to a staple in the arena or pit by a chain of about fifteen feet in length, so that the defending animal had relative freedom of movement over a circle of thirty feet. "They," said old Hentzner in 1598, "are fastened behind, and thus worried by great English bulldogs, not without great risque from the horns of the one and the teeth of the other." The dog, attended by his owner, was held in front of the chained animal by the ears until he was wild with fury, and then let go. The plucky dog went straight at the head of the bull or bear, the middling one took an occasional nip, and bayed just out of reach of the quarry and of the staff of his master, who accompanied him into the pit; the coward at the first encounter sought refuge from both bull and man by running under the legs of the quarry, and was frequently trampled dead. Both bull and bear were often decorated with huge rosettes stuck between their eyes with pitch. This practice had the advantage of giving the dog something which would come away with his teeth, and as it was fixed on the most dangerous spot, so to speak, of the whole beast, a dog which seized the rosette and dropped back into the ring shaking the trophy as part of his enemy was hugely prized.

There is an excellent account of such a baiting by Misson, the French advocate, who was in England during the reign of William the Third, a period just before the prime of Hockley in the Hole. The experienced bull, it would seem, took things coolly at

8 AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

first. He kept his feet close together, so as to avoid any attack from beneath, and presented a horn at the advancing enemy. The horn, as we learn, was either blunted at the point or provided with a sheath, which minimised the risk of a gore. Great trouble was often taken to equip the bull properly in the matter of horns. Writes Mr. John Houghton, F.R.S., in 1694: "Some keep him (the bull) on purpose for the sport of baiting, cutting of the tips of his horns, and with pitch, tow, and such like matters, fasten upon them the great horns of oxen." We learn also, from that gentleman's same work on husbandry, that many butchers were accustomed to bait their bulls before killing, thereby making, as they held, "his flesh more tender and proper meat fit to be eaten."

The old bull who knew his business relied chiefly upon getting the dog in the hollow of these long horns, either provided by nature or by the care of his master, as Mr. Houghton describes, and upon disabling it by a toss in the air and a drop of perhaps thirty feet on the hard floor of the pit. The experienced dog knew the danger, and avoided it as much as possible by crouching on the ground in the preliminary fencing for an opening, which usually preceded the rush for the throat. If the bull made his coup, the dog went flying into the air, often into the boxes twenty feet above the pit, as when Mr. Evelyn saw one dropped into a lady's lap in the third tier in 1670. Pepys noticed a similar incident about the same time. When the dog was in the air there

THE DIVERSIONS OF HOCKLEY 9

was a rush of his friends to break his fall: "some with their backs, to give him a soft reception, and others with long poles, which they offer him slantways, to the intent that sliding down them it may break the force of his fall." The high-bred bulldog was little discouraged by the toss unless disabled by the shock; indeed, there are instances recorded of dogs with broken legs returning to the charge. If the dog got home "with his eye teeth he sticks to him like a leech, and would sooner die than leave his hold; you might cut him to pieces joint by joint before he would let him loose. What is to be done then? While some hold the bull, others thrust staves into the dog's mouth, and open it by main force." Thus M. Misson. We learn other details from a much later authority, the author who furnished out Mr. Henry Alken's well-known plates on British Sports with letterpress. The dogs usually were silent in attack, and aimed, as a rule, "at the eye, lips, under jaw, and throat of the bull." The bull's roar, we are told, was much appreciated by connoisseurs, and he was allowed a hole in the ground in which to rub his wounded muzzle at proper intervals. On the other hand, he was often infuriated by being tortured with hot irons, and that almost within living memory.

In bear-baiting, which was perhaps rarer than bull-baiting, on account of the greater scarcity of the quarry, there was even more risk for the dog. The bear was less vulnerable by reason of its coarse fur, and its powers of offence were greater, the hug being

10 AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

often employed against the dog with great effect. At other times the dogs were frequently crushed by the bear rolling when seized.

Such were the main features of the bull and bear baitings at Hockley in the Hole on the Mondays and Thursdays of each week throughout the year, the entertainments being often preceded by a parade of the animals in the streets. Thus Gay, in "Trivia," alludes to such a procession:—

"When through the streets, with slow and solemn air,
Led by the nostril walks the muzzled bear;
Behind him moves, majestically dull,
The pride of Hockley Hole, the surly bull.
Learn hence the period of the week to name,
Mondays and Thursdays are the days of game."

But there were variations and *divertissements* from the main scheme of the entertainment. One of these was the not very intelligible joy of whipping a blind-folded bear. "Here often follows that of whipping a blinded bear, which is performed by five or six men standing circularly with whips, which they exercise upon him without any mercy. As he cannot escape from them because of his chain, he defends himself with all his force and skill, throwing down all he can within his reach and are not active enough to get out of it, on which occasions he frequently tears the whips out of their hands and breaks them."

An advertisement of 1710 gives such details of the miscellaneous forms of sport to be enjoyed at Hockley

THE DIVERSIONS OF HOCKLEY II

that our information on the subject would hardly be complete without a quotation in full.

“At the Bear Garden, Hockley in the Hole, this is to give notice to all gentlemen gamesters and others, that on this present Monday is a match to be fought by two dogs, one from Newgate Market against one from Honey Lane Market, at a bull, for a guinea, to be spent.” That guinea to be spent speaks eloquently of the quality of the audiences of Hockley, and suggests a fine circulation of pewter mugs from the “Coach and Horses” next door. “Five let goes out of hand,” proceeds the advertisement, “which goes fairest and farthest wins all. Likewise a green bull to be baited, which was never baited before;” the green bull was, no doubt, a fine opportunity of entering young dogs; “and a bull to be turned loose with fireworks all over him; also a mad ass to be baited. With a variety of bull and bear baiting, and a dog to be drawn up with fireworks. To begin exactly at three of the clock.”

This entertainment of May 1710 was, we believe, a special occasion, inaugurating a new management. There had been a dreadful tragedy a year before, when Mr. Preston, the proprietor of the establishment, had been attacked by one of his bears, and “almost devoured before his friends were aware of his danger.” A sermon, as we read, was preached upon the sad event in the neighbouring church of St. James’ by the Rev. Dr. Pead, under whom the parishioners of Clerkenwell then sat. The general

doings at Hockley were calculated to furnish texts for many sermons. But this tragedy, we are afraid, was not taken in any chastened spirit by the frequenters of the place; it quite likely provided the best advertisement Hockley ever received, and drew increased crowds of "gentlemen gamesters and others" to the support of the Widow Preston, who continued the management of her unlucky husband.

For the next ten years, indeed, there is ample evidence of the prosperity of the place. Old collections of handbills and the old files of the news-sheets of those days teem with notices of the diversions of Hockley. There are various details to be gathered from a consideration of these. We read of "two bears dogs to jump three jumps apiece at the bear, which jumps highest, for two shillings to be spent." The bear was evidently a valuable property, and not often baited to the death, and the dogs were matched against each other for a definite match of a certain duration only—a short test of courage and agility, and not necessarily a fight with the bear to a finish. There is frequent mention, too, of "the famous bull of fireworks, which pleased the gentlemen to admiration." Then we read of "twenty dogs to fight for a collar, and the dog that runs farthest and fairest wins the collar, with other diversions of bull and bear baiting, it being a day of general sport by all the old gamesters."

On other occasions there was more finality in the arrangements. Thus in 1716: "At the request of several persons of quality, on Monday, the 11th of

THE DIVERSIONS OF HOCKLEY 13

this instant June, is one of the largest and most mischievous bears that ever was seen in England to be baited to death, with other variety of bull and bear baiting, as also a wild bull to be turned loose in the game-place with fireworks all over him. To begin exactly at three o'clock in the afternoon, because the sport continues long."

Such sports as these were purveyed continuously to Londoners at Hockley and at the other establishments we have mentioned. There was a distinct variation from the ordinary show in an attraction advertised to take place at a bear garden "at the backside of Soho Square" in 1716. "At the desire of several persons of quality a leopard 12 feet in length to be baited to death, and gentlemen who chuse to risk their dogs are allowed to assist. The leopard on view at the Boarded House, Marylebone Fields." A leopard of 12 feet long to be baited to death suggests long odds against any number of dogs. We read also of "An African Tyger on a stage four feet high to be worried by six bull and bear dogs for £100" at Hockley in the following year. Sometimes the proceedings would be varied by a fight between dogs of different breeds, as when Mr. Evelyn saw such a contest at the Bear Garden at Bankside in 1670, and tells us of "the cruel mastiff" being beaten by "the Irish wolfhound, which was a tall grey hound and a stately creature indeed,"—a reference of interest to that extinct breed of Irish wolfhound, a specimen of which is painted by Vandyke in one of his great portraits of Lord Strafford.

Hockley, it is clear, only continued the tradition of the Royal Bear Garden in Southwark, and hardly improved upon some of the brutalities practised there under distinguished auspices. Malcolm, for example, records a most surprising entertainment advertised by the Bankside management in 1682. "Notice was given in the papers that on the 12th of April a horse of uncommon strength, of eighteen or nineteen hands high, would be baited to death at His Majesty's Bear Garden at the Hope, on the Bankside, for the amusement of the Morocco Ambassador, and many of the nobility who knew the horse, and any others who would pay the price of admission. It seems this animal originally belonged to the Earl of Rochester, and being of a ferocious disposition, had killed several of his brethren, for which misdeeds he was sold to the Earl of Dorchester, in whose service committing several similar offences he was transferred to the worse than savages who kept the Bear Garden. On the day appointed several dogs were set upon the vindictive steed, which he destroyed or drove from the arena. At this instant, his owners determined to preserve him for a future day's sport, and directed a person to lead him away. But before the horse had reached London Bridge, the spectators demanded the fulfilment of the promise of baiting him to death, and began to destroy the building. To conclude, the poor beast was fetched back, and other dogs being set upon him without effect, he was stabbed with a sword."

THE DIVERSIONS OF HOCKLEY 15

The diversions of Bankside were over, or nearly so, before Hockley came into repute as the home of the same entertainments, but Hockley at one period seems to have had a dangerous competitor in Mr. Wells, of the Bear Garden, Marylebone. Thus a newspaper of 1721 speaks of the death of that gentleman as a distinct relief to Madam Preston at the old establishment in Clerkenwell. "By the decease of Mr. Wells," remarks the journal, "the original bear garden in Hockley in the Hole is now likely to be thronged, especially since all the gamesters are resolved to bait every Monday and Thursday; and the gladiators have promised frequently to test their skill there, the brutes to box, the furmity and hasty-pudding eaters to gobble down their guttage at Madam Preston's and no other place." A poet, too, broke into song on the same occasion.

"Shed, ye inhabitants, a flood of tears,
Howl, all ye dogs, roar, all ye bulls and bears,
Ye butchers weep, for ye no doubt are grievers
And sound his loss with marrow-bones and cleavers—
Wells is no more, yet death has been so kind
That he hath left the bulls and bears behind."

There is ample evidence that the journalistic prophet of the continued prosperity of Hockley was well inspired, and we will quote a very full advertisement of that establishment of the date of 1730, both as a proof of this and also as completing our knowledge of the varied amusements of the places which had the torture of animals as their chief attraction.

16 AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

“At His Majesty’s Bear Garden at Hockley in the Hole, this present Monday, three great matches will be fought.

“First, a brindled dog from Hampstead to fight against a fallow-coloured bitch from Chelsea ; to fight ten let goes apiece at the famous Newington Bull for half a guinea each ; the dog or bitch which goes farthest in or fairest, wins the money.

“Secondly, a fallow-coloured dog from Whitechapel to fight against a fallow-coloured from Spittlefields Market, both to fight let go for let go at the famous Cambridge Bull for one guinea each, the dog that is killed or runs away, loses the money.

“Likewise, a mad bull to be dressed up with fireworks and turned loose in the game-place.

“Likewise, a dog to be dressed up with fireworks over him and turned loose with the bull amongst the men in the ground, also a bear to be turned loose at the same time, and a cat to be ty’d to the bull’s tail.

“*Note.*—The doors will be open at four and the sport begin between five and six o’clock, because the diversion will last long and the days grow short.”

The month fixed for the saturnalia here described was August, and the eloquence of this handbill would not be improved by any comment of our own.

The exhibitions of bear and bull baiting, and the other variations of animal torture which we have been considering, were fixed, as we have said, for Mondays and Thursdays. There was no lack of diversion at Hockley and similar establishments on the other days of the week, when their hospitalities were dispensed to clients whose tastes were broad enough to include contests in which the human animal was alone engaged ; and although from a modern point of view these are not edifying, we turn to them with some relief. The term prize-fight has come in our day to convey an idea which

differs greatly from its original meaning of the days of Anne. The great institution of the Prize Ring, which flourished well within living memory and found employment for that strange army of heroes who supported themselves by the strange industry of punching each other's heads, was a later development of the prize-fight of Anne and the early Georges. The original prize-fight, though apparently a very fearful encounter between armed men, was in reality a much less dangerous affair than the serious encounter with the fist which delighted our forefathers of later years, and decided the ownership of so much of their money in the form of stakes. The prize-fight of Hockley in the Hole and of Figg's amphitheatre in the Oxford Road, though usually performed with lethal weapons, or with cudgel and quarter-staff at the least, was much less of a reality, and was organised solely for the purposes of exhibition and of the resulting gate-money.

Side by side in the same papers with the advertisement of bull and bear baitings we have quoted, or printed on similar handbills, began to appear announcements of the strange and varied encounters which went to make up the prize-fight of the same times. These advertisements usually took the form of a public challenge of one gladiator by another, or, as they loved to term themselves, "Masters of the Noble Art of Self-Defence," a phrase, by the way, which was in great favour with the boxers of a later period. Hockley in the Hole was the favourite place for these

encounters, as we have said; the eminence of one of their professors, Mr. James Figg, gave much renown to an establishment set up by that gentleman in the Oxford Road, as a private speculation of his own, and they flourished also at the other establishments devoted to bull and bear baiting, notably at the old Bear Garden itself at Bankside. The meeting was always arranged beforehand, and the challenges appeared in the same issue of the paper, or were printed on the same handbill. They usually had a very martial ring about them; there is, for example, more ardour than modesty in the following, quoted from a handbill preserved in the Harleian collection, and dated July 3rd, 1709:—

“At the Bear Garden at Hockley in the Hole, near Clerkenwell Green, a trial of skill shall be performed at the noble science of self-defence, on Wednesday next, at two of the clock precisely.

“I, George Grey, born in the city of Norwich, who have fought in most part of the West Indies—viz., Jamaica and Barbadoes, and several other parts of the world—in all twenty-five times, and upon the stage, and never yet was worsted, and being now lately come to London, do invite James Harris to meet and exercise at these following weapons, viz., backsword, sword and dagger, sword and buckler, single falchion and case of falchions.

“I, James Harris, master of the noble science of self-defence, and formerly rid in the Horse Guards, and have fought an hundred and ten prizes, and never left the stage to any man, will not fail, God willing, to meet this brave and bold inviter at the time and place appointed, desiring sharp swords and from him no favour.

“No person to be upon the stage but the seconds. Vivat Regina.”

THE DIVERSIONS OF HOCKLEY 19

In the first year of the eighteenth century, we may learn from the *Postboy* that Mr. John Terrewest, of Oundle, in Northamptonshire, was desirous of meeting Mr. William King, who lately fought Mr. Joseph Thomas, at the usual weapons. Mr. King, we find, was in no way backward: "I, William King, will not fail to meet this bold inviter, desiring, &c. *Note.*—There is lately built a pleasant cool gallery for gentlemen." The pleasant cool gallery, we imagine, was not at all superfluous, for we gather from another advertisement that the doors "will be open at 3 and the masters mount at 6." It does not require great imagination to picture the incidents and temperature of a three-hours' vigil with a typical audience of Hockley in the Hole, on a summer afternoon in a close ill-ventilated booth, with the fashionable accompaniments of beer and tobacco.

We have the advantage, indeed, of the observations of a very notable eyewitness upon the proceedings which followed such challenges as we have quoted. Mr. Richard Steele was present at one of these encounters, and he wrote and told the *Spectator* all about it. Steele, as we know, had a very keen eye for the peculiarities of his contemporaries, and his *Spectator*, No. 436, describing the humours of Hockley, is not the least human of the many pictures of the life of Queen Anne which we owe to that delightful pen.

A gentleman at Hockley was apparently a rarity, for Miss Preston, the daughter of the ill-fated patron

of the place, who was later to be slain by his own bear, noticed Dick, and brought him a cup of water to mitigate the heat and the tedium of the waiting. He noticed that the damsel was very fair, fair enough, indeed, "to be the proper Amaryllis on these occasions," and Dick, in his own inimitable way, fell a-musing on a proper regulation of the combat which should make Elizabeth Preston the lady of one of the combatants, "and her beauty in comparison with that of some other nymph the subject matter of the challengers."

The challenge had been handed about, as we have already described, "printed on a whitish brown paper, put into my hand in the street." James Millar, it appears, lately come from the frontiers of Portugal, had heard of the fame of Timothy Buck of London, and had invited him to a meeting at Hockley.

Steele shows us the humours of the crowd waiting for the appearance of the combatants, the scuffling for good places, the "discontent of several active persons in the pit, who thought they were placed rather according to their fortune than their merit"; and the rush of these active ones to the galleries. Here "dispute between merit and property brought many to the ground, and raised others in proportion to the highest seats by turns for the space of ten minutes."

There was a sudden hush and a cessation of all dispute when the combatants appeared. "Miller is a man of 6 ft. 8 in. in height, of a kind but bold aspect, well fashioned, and ready of his limbs." Buck

had "a perfect composure which engaged the judgment." Millar came on "preceded by two disabled drummers, to show, I suppose, that the prospect of maimed bodies did not in the least deter him. There ascended with the daring Millar a gentleman with a dogged air, as unsatisfied that he was not a principal. This son of anger lowered at the whole assembly, and weighing himself as he marched round from side to side with a stiff knee and shoulder, gave intimations of the purpose he smothered until he saw the issue of this encounter." We learn that the combatants each wore a ribbon on his sword arm, a survival, as Dick opined, of "the custom of wearing a mistress's favour on such occasions of old."

The men, stripped to their shirts, advanced to the middle of the stage, shook hands, and set to. It is difficult to know what rules governed these encounters; the swords were certainly sharp and blood flowed freely, but there was never a serious attack with the point, and there is only record of a single death as a result of half a century of fighting, and that an accidental one from blood-poisoning. No padding was used, apparently, no masks or jackets, which are necessary even in foil practice to-day, and yet it is certain that great injury was as a rule avoided.

In this particular fight witnessed by Steele, "Millar's heat laid him open to the rebuke of the calm Buck by a large cut on the forehead. Much effusion of blood covered his eyes in a moment, and the huzzas of the crowd undoubtedly quickened his

anguish." The human and sympathetic touch which is seldom absent from Steele's writing, especially when there is a woman concerned, does not fail him here. In the midst of the tumult he had eyes "for a poor nymph in the gallery who suffered for Millar, and burst into a flood of tears." Millar's head was bound up, and he came on again "with a little rage." "The next was a warm, eager onset, which ended in a decisive stroke on the left leg of Millar. The lady in the gallery during this second strife covered her face, and for my part," writes Dick, "I could not keep my thoughts from being mostly employed in the consideration of her unhappy circumstance in that moment, hearing the clash of swords and apprehending life or victory concerned her lover in every blow, but not daring to satisfy herself on whom they fell." Millar's wound was a deep one, and was "exposed to the view of all who could delight in it." The proceedings ended with a challenge from Millar's second to fight Buck that day fortnight at the same weapons, "he declaring himself the master of the renowned Gormon, but Buck denied him the honour of that courageous discipline, and asserting that he had himself taught that champion, accepted the challenge."

It is never safe to take such a master of the ironic method as Steele too literally, but another contribution of his to the *Spectator* may perhaps supply a clue to the mystery of the strange safety of the combatants in these struggles with deadly weapons. Dick, writing in the name of "Scabbard Rusty," describes a

THE DIVERSIONS OF HOCKLEY 23

conversation he had overheard while sitting in a box of an alehouse, "near the renowned seat of honour, Hockley in the Hole." To him entered "two masters of the science," and he heard them agreeing to quarrel on the first opportunity, which was fixed no later than the same evening "at a meeting of the fraternity of basket hilts." "Will you give cuts, or receive?" said one of these warriors to the other. "Receive," was the reply. "Are you a passionate man?" "No, provided you cut no more and no deeper than we agree." Steele thought his readers ought to be acquainted with these facts, in order that the people might not pay their money to see real fighting and be cheated.

Before the development of boxing, which we trace in another chapter, these contests with the sword had a great vogue among the sporting lights of those early times, and the cult of "the noble science of self-defence," of which they were the expression, found employment for a large body of gladiators. The most eminent of these were fortunate in a contemporary biographer, who has rescued their names from oblivion, and has preserved for us some interesting details of the mysteries of their profession. Captain John Godfrey is as helpful to us in the matter of the early prize-fight of Hockley and Figg's amphitheatre as in tracing the development of pugilism from the primitive encounters of Taylor's booth in the Oxford Road a few years later. His curious quarto of 1753 is as eloquent upon the proper strokes of the sword

as upon the virtues of the blow with the fist in the stomach or under the ear, which had such sterling value for the earnest pugilist. Listen to his cold-blooded exposition of the niceties of the science of the sword, and the proper objects to be kept in view by those who practised it.

"In battles fought upon the stage," says the captain, "you will find all inside cuts to be much deeper and severer than the outside . . . they are more likely to hit the face, which being more tender than the head, will sooner carry the battle. . . . An outside throw, especially if it be made slanting with a kind of back sweep, must hit him in the face, and this sweeping turn carries a direct edge." Then the wrist of your opponent should be attacked as often as possible, for an assault on that vulnerable spot, properly driven home, obviously finished the contest in your favour. "The most dangerous cut of the sword to your opponent," says Godfrey, "is the inside blow at the wrist; the instant you hit him in the inside of the wrist your victory is secure." You may learn the virtues of the drawing-stroke in going down to the leg, the very stroke apparently which decided the contest which Steele witnessed in favour of Mr. Buck, in the captain's quarto. The whole essay has a blood-thirsty flavour, but the profession was certainly less dangerous than it appeared, and the chief object of the exhibition fight was, we believe, a slashing flesh-wound, which might produce a good show of blood.

The characters of the masters of this strange pro-

fession are also displayed on a generous scale by the captain. He begins with the very men whom Steele watched at Hockley. "Timothy Buck was a most solid master . . . he was the pillar of the art, and all his followers who excelled built upon him. Millar was the palpable gentleman through the prize-fighter; he was a most beautiful picture on the stage, taking in all his attitudes, and vastly engaging in his demeanour. There was such an easy action in him and agreeable smile in the midst of fighting that one could not help being prejudiced in his favour."

William Gill was "a swordsman formed by Gill's own hand," the captain never beheld anybody better for the leg than Gill; "his cuts were remarkably more severe and deep" than the ordinary. Why, when he fought Butler, the Irishman, Butler's leg was laid quite open, "his calf falling down to his ankle." Poor Butler got blood-poisoning from the wound and died, the only recorded martyr of the sport.

"John Parkes of Coventry was a thorough swordsman, heavy, slow, and inactive, but of stanch judgment." Sutton, on the other hand, had "a nimble body and very agile joints under a heavy head." "Mr. Johnson is a stanch swordsman and a thorough master of the true principle of the backsword, but I must take the liberty to say that his joints are stiff and slow in action. Mr. Sherlock must be pronounced an elegant swordsman with uncommon merit, but is not faultless. I have seen Mr. Sherlock," continues the

captain, "engaged with a man of far less abilities than himself, when, upon a bare stamp of the other's foot and a movement of his sword, he has hurried back with precipitation." Finally, "John Delforce, the only rival to Figg's memory, is so well known for a cudgeller on the stage that I need not lose any time in reviving him to thought." Cudgel-playing, that is, single-stick, was the rehearsal for the fuller glory of the fight with the steel.

It was a queer way of getting a living, to be sure, this submission of the body to blood-letting and hacking, which, however, was usually under very good control, and always stopped at the right moment, without the loss of an eye or limb, much less of a life. The fact speaks volumes for the swordsmanship of the performers and for their sobriety. We imagine that these heroes of Hockley were vastly more respectable members of society than the patrons who flocked to see them bleed. They often became the darlings of the public and notable personages in certain circles. Millar was given a commission in the army, and assisted the young Duke of Cumberland in the suppression of the rebellion of the "Forty-Five." A Mr. John Sparks whom Millar was reputed to have beaten, a fact which inspired Mr. Buck to challenge him, was thus described on his tombstone in Coventry churchyard: "To the memory of Mr. John Sparks, a native of this city. He was a man of a mild disposition, a gladiator by profession, who, having fought three hundred and fifty battles in the principal parts

of Europe, at length quitted the stage with honour and applause, sheathed his sword, and with Christian resignation submitted to the grand victor in the 62nd year of his age, *anno salutatis humanae, 1735.*" The epitaph would not disgrace the tomb of a bishop.

We have mentioned Mr. Figg's separate establishment in the Oxford Road; this was really a place of greater respectability than Hockley and the rest; it was the first of the London schools-of-arms, a place of tuition in the "noble science of self-defence" for such patrons as Mr. Figg could attract from the better classes, and an exhibition from which the coarser attractions of Hockley were excluded. There were no bear-baitings or dog-fights at Figg's, and its shows were confined to the various displays of the prize-fighting profession, of which Mr. Figg himself was the acknowledged *doyen*.

"Figg," says Captain Godfrey, with a fine enthusiasm, "was the Atlas of the sword, and may he remain the gladiating statue. In him strength and resolution and unparalleled judgment conspired to form a matchless master. There was a majesty shone in his countenance and blazed in all his actions beyond all I ever saw." Such of this majesty as it was possible to preserve by the graphic arts still blazes from the portrait of Figg in mezzotint by Faber, and in several engravings by Mr. Hogarth, who much appreciated Figg as a model. This paragon amongst prize-fighters was a native of Thame, in Oxfordshire, and was indeed a notable figure in the sporting circles

of his day. His patrons were of a higher grade in the social scale than the average audiences of Hockley; the bloods from "White's" and the "Cocoa Tree" were often at Figg's, and there is frequent mention of the entertainments he provided at his amphitheatre in the annals of the first half of the last century. "We took coach to Figg's amphitheatre," says Byrom in his *Journal* in 1725, "where Mr. Leicester paid 2/6 for me. Figg and Sutton fought. Figg had a wound, and bled pretty much. Sutton had a blow with a quarter-staff just above his knee, which made him limp, so they gave over." Figg fought Sparkes before the Duke of Lorraine and Count Kinski and suite in 1731. "His Serene Highness was extremely pleased," we are told, "and expressed his entire satisfaction, and ordered them a handsome gratuity." You will see Figg's portrait in the right-hand corner of Hogarth's fine plate of Southwark Fair, where he rides a pony with a very martial air, and draws attention to his honourable scars by prodigious pieces of sticking-plaster on his closely shaven head. He appears, too, in the same artist's "Modern Midnight Conversation," and also, it is said, in Plate II. of the "Rake's Progress." Mr. Hogarth etched for Figg a business card or ticket of admission to the amphitheatre, which may yet be found in collections of that artist's engravings.

Figg, we learn, was the sworn foe of all Irishmen, and fought his 271st battle with Mr. Holmes in October of 1735, a statement which is not without

interest as a measure of the danger of the prize-fight with swords. His advertisements are curious and of a historical or poetical cast, introducing allusions to Cæsar and Marius, laurels, cedars of Lebanon and cypresses, and hinting at early graves and tombstones for his opponents. He was undoubtedly a very expert swordsman, a notable master of the quarter-staff, and perhaps the first professional pugilist of whom anything is recorded, in which latter capacity we examine his career elsewhere.

We have dealt, so far, with the chief attractions of these curious and almost forgotten places of amusement, but there was one feature common to nearly all of them which still claims mention. In 1722 appeared the following advertisement, which was no doubt typical of many others:—

“*Challenge.*—I, Elizabeth Wilkinson, of Clerkenwell, having had some words with Hannah Highfield, and requiring satisfaction, do invite her to meet me on the stage and box for three guineas, each woman holding half a crown in each hand, and the first woman that drops her money to lose the battle.

“*Answer.*—I, Hannah Highfield, of Newgate Market, hearing of the resoluteness of Elizabeth Wilkinson, will not fail, God willing, to give her more blows than words, desiring home blows, and of her no favour. She may expect a good thumping.”

“They maintained the battle for a long time,” says the *London Journal* for June of 1722, describing this strange battle, “to the no small satisfaction of the spectators.”

These Amazons were much in evidence both at Figg’s and elsewhere, and their encounters, no doubt,

supplied a pleasant change from the ordinary attractions of the place. The challenges were certainly arranged beforehand, like those emanating from Mr. Steele's acquaintance in the inn box, and the "words" referred to by Elizabeth were no doubt exchanged over a friendly pot of porter at some favourite house of call near the Fleet Ditch. The pious appeal to Providence was common in that day, and survives still, in the form of "D.V.," in those curious announcements which one reads in the local papers, when school children and the congregations of suburban chapels are challenged to the contests of the tea urn and muffin. The artificial character of the quarrel and of its preliminaries, however, does not appear to have diminished the realities of the encounter. The ladies were dressed in "close jacket, short petticoats, and holland drawers, and with white stockings and pumps." There is much eloquence in that condition of holding a half-crown in each fist. The lady who forgot the rule in the vehemence of the onset and resorted to her natural weapons, lost the day. The punishment of the encounter was thus limited to the thumps referred to by Hannah, and that thoughtful condition of the half-crown excluded the scratchings and hair-pullings which might have been expected in the circumstances. There was evidently a recognised band of these hardy women, for we read of "Mrs. Stokes, the city championess," desiring to meet "the Hibernian Heroine" at Figg's for a nominal stake.

THE DIVERSIONS OF HOCKLEY 31

Nor were feminine encounters confined to the contests of the fist. Strange as it may seem to modern ideas, prize-fighters with the cold steel were at times assisted by their spouses, and matched against other greatly daring ladies who had the help of their husbands. Thus, as Malcolm relates in 1725, "Sutton, the champion of Kent, and a courageous female heroine of that county fought Stokes, at Figg's, and his much admired consort of London. £40 was to be given to the male and female who gave most cuts with the swords, and £20 for most blows at quarter-staff, besides the collection in the box."

The entertainments we have described, both at Hockley and similar places, and at Figg's, continued their course with little interruption until about the middle of the last century, by which time the disappearance of Hockley and such like places had banished bull and bear baiting to the suburbs and provinces, and pugilism had taken the place of the prize-fight with the sword. Like many of the amusements of the period, they were attacked from time to time by the puritanical body, but always with indifferent success. They resisted presentment by Grand Juries, memorials to quarter sessions, and sermons by the clergy, from bishops downward. The activity of certain sections of the public where public amusements were concerned was a remarkable feature of the social life of the eighteenth century, as indeed it is of that of our own times. It was particularly in evidence when any natural convulsion brought terror or suffer-

ing to the community. Nerves upset by a great storm or by the shock of an earthquake would find a cause for such visitations in a Providence outraged by the enormities of the masquerade, the license of the playhouses, or the ribaldry of Hockley in the Hole. The great storm of 1703 produced Mr. Addison's fine compliment to the Duke of Marlborough in the famous image of the angel riding the whirlwind, and it produced also an agitation against cakes and ale in many forms. Incidentally, too, it saved the lives of many devoted cocks who were accustomed to immolation by the practice of the "cockshy" on Shrove Tuesday, a function which was suppressed during the consternation which followed the dreadful visitation of 1703. But Hockley survived all agitation, and its final overthrow was the result of the growth of London and the municipal improvements which accompanied it. The whole district was drained and its level raised in 1756, when it is probable the bear garden disappeared. The cult of the London prize-ring had already supplanted the attractions of its contests with sword and quarter-staff, and its bull and bear baitings found patronage further afield.

Both those sports remained lawful amusements until the year 1835, and there are persons still living who can remember having seen bulls baited in public places, such as the Bull Ring in Birmingham, for example—a name which still echoes the sport. Well on in this present century famous bulls were taken progresses from county to county, and matched

BEAR-BAITING

DRAWN BY H. ALKEN



against local dogs. There was a benevolent gentleman of Wokingham who was so devoted to the diversion of bull-baiting, that he left provision in his will for two bulls to be baited yearly for the amusement of the people of his native town; and it is said that the bulls are still purveyed to the beneficiaries, but in the form of beef. So late as 1802, an attempt at parliamentary interference with bull and bear baiting, though backed by the efforts of such men as Sheridan and Wilberforce, was defeated. Mr. Windham, who successfully resisted the measure, looked upon it, we are told, "as the first result of a conspiracy of Jacobins and Methodists to render the people grave and serious." Bull and bear baiting thus had a legal status until 1835, when a career of the sport during nearly seven centuries of English life was closed by an Act of Parliament.

There have been many headshakings over the moral enormities of those old amusements of Englishmen which seem entirely justified. The present is certainly not the moment to defend them. At their worst, they were less cruel than the bull-fight in Spain of to-day, because they were encounters between animals handicapped into something like equality, and furious with rage. The casualties were generally confined to the dogs, who in an average afternoon lost two of their number. The sickening cruelty of non-combatant animals done to death, like the terror-stricken horses of the bull-fight, was at least avoided. At their best, they were certainly

less cruel than the low meetings for closed coursing common a few years ago, and the iniquities practised upon helpless pigeons at some of the low modern shooting-matches, in order to add to the eccentricities of their flight.

The personal encounters between the professors of the sword we put upon a different footing altogether. They were certainly unedifying as popular spectacles; but we rank the danger to their exponents as much less than that of the players of a North Country football match of to-day, or even of the referee.

In considering the whole subject, we have to remember that indifference to suffering was a national asset in the days when the British Empire was in the making, and that it is quite possible that modern sentiment might take a moderate swing back in the same direction were the new century now about to open to bring with it the hardening of men's hearts, which comes with years of war and the pressgang. At the present moment, however, hardly a single trace of these old amusements of the town survives. The descendants of Figg and Millar are nowhere recognisable; Hockley in the Hole may be very faintly and innocently reflected in the unprepossessing features of the bow-legged, underhung bulldogs which grin at us from the stands of the kennel shows.

CHAPTER II

LONDON AL FRESCO—THE TEA GARDENS

LONDON has always shown a disposition to make the best of a short summer and a fickle climate. You may turn to the letters, or diaries, or news-sheets of any period since that of the Stuarts, and find continuous record of a public ever ready to support an entertainment which included among its attractions the consumption of victuals in the open air. The peg upon which this attraction was hung has never been a matter of great moment. Highly-born people flocked to Spring Gardens in the days of Charles the First without intending to play bowls. The Mulberry Garden of the same times was only an attractive title for an open-air restaurant. Music and the promenade were the excuses for eating suppers at Vauxhall. The waters of Bagnigge Wells were little drunk by the humbler people who flocked there, except in the form of tea. And coming to more recent times, the fireworks and the "twenty thousand additional lamps" of the Vauxhall and Cremorne of the first half of the present century had less to do with the success of those famous institutions than the bad food and worse liquor, which Londoners are ever

36 AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

ready to pay for at exorbitant rates if only served out of doors.

There is, in fact, an unbroken tradition of *al fresco* entertainment in London over a period of two centuries at least. From the days of Charles the First until well on in the present reign, there is continuous record of junketings in one part of the town or another. Let us turn to the accounts of these old merrymakings, scattered in newspapers and magazines; preserved in advertisements, often of an almost touching quaintness; in letters and memoirs, and chance phrases of the diaries of generations long since asleep; in the records also, it must be confessed, of police courts and hostile licensing authorities. The draughtsmen and the engravers of a century were often busy with the doings at these places, and will give us much help in repeopling their forgotten shades and arbours, and in recalling a phase of social life which provided one of the chief relaxations of numbers of our citizen ancestors.

We know little or nothing of the *al fresco* entertainment in London before the days of Charles the First, and its vogue may be said to have come to an end with the extinction of Cremorne within the memory of those not yet past middle age; just as the need of open air relaxation in London was growing sorest, as it would seem. That, as we say, gives a period of over two centuries during which the *al fresco* entertainment flourished, a space of time in which London and the needs of its inhabitants have been totally trans-

formed. It is important to remember this fact, and to think of the London of all but the present century as a great centre of population indeed, but compared with its present huge bulk, as a relatively small town. Take any old map, for example, of the middle years of the period we have marked out as that of the London *al fresco*, 1750 to 1760, the palmy days of its vogue, and trace the boundaries of London upon it. When George the Third came to the throne, London, including Westminster, was bounded by Oxford Street and Holborn on the north, by the river on the south, by the outer boundary of the city on the east, and by Hyde Park, Arlington Street, and St. James' Street on the west. All the rest of modern London was suburban merely, or open and pleasant country interspersed with wild heaths, and dotted with ancient villages. That country stretched out fingers and touched the city wall itself at Finsbury and the Tower. The fashionable dwellers in the Savoy and the lawyers of the Temple looked across the river to the hills of Surrey and Kent; and there is room for reflection in the fact that the Zoological Gardens, which were not opened till 1828, had for years to be fenced against the hares and rabbits which nibbled the bark off their shrubs and dug up their bulbs.

It was in and about a town of such dimensions then, and with such surroundings, that the *al fresco* entertainment took origin and developed, a town thickly populated and stuffy, it is true, the bulk of whose inhabitants lived and died within the limits of their

own streets, but still a town whose innermost slum was within easy walk of a delightful country, and whose suburbs were without the distressing squalor and vulgarity of architecture which make for some of us the oldest part of London to-day its most cheerful part. It was the citizens of such a town, sober merchants and shopkeepers, apprentices, sempstresses, and artisans who worked continuously, but leisurely and without much stress, during the week and spread themselves over an area of many square miles on Sundays, who formed the chief patrons of the *al fresco* entertainment. The lawyers and military men who filled the chief of the few recognised professions of the last century, supplied their quota of course, and the aristocracy came to most of the *al fresco* entertainments at one time or another, but merely as incidental visitors. The *al fresco* entertainments of the aristocracy were the great gardens of Vauxhall and Ranelagh, and these two famous places of resort had a character all their own as such, which makes it desirable to treat of them in a separate chapter. In this, we ask the reader to follow us through the more humble of the tea gardens and spas, most of which had some special attraction of cake and ale, or bowling-green or fives court of its own, which might recommend it to the patronage of a special *clientèle* in a day when competition between such places was often severe.

The first *al fresco* entertainment in London of which there is anything like a full account, although open to the public, was not, it is true, of a very democratic

character, or supported by the patronage of any but persons of a certain condition. Spring Garden at Charing Cross was of royal origin, and Charles the First was there accustomed to rub shoulders with his subjects in what was practically a part of his own royal gardens at Whitehall. The place took its name from a spring or fountain, which, in the pleasant fashion of those times, was contrived to sprinkle those who came to consult the sun-dial. It is difficult to understand how the public first gained admission to Spring Garden. Its earliest attraction seems to have been a bowling-green, "and there was kept in it," says Gerrard, writing to Strafford in 1634, "an ordinary of six shillings a meal, continual bibbing and drinking of wine all day under the trees; two or three quarrels every week. It was grown scandalous and insufferable, besides, my Lord Digby being reprehended for striking Will Crofts in the King's Garden, he answered that he took it for a common bowling-place where all paid money for their coming in." This irregularity of Lord Digby and Will Crofts led to an interference by the royal authorities. We are told that Spring Garden was "put down for one day," but Queen Henrietta interceding, "it was reprieved for this year, but hereafter it shall be no more bowling-place."

This garden, therefore, which we take to be the forerunner and the model of the later *al fresco* entertainments of London, was obviously in full swing in 1634, and the displeasure of King Charles and of others in authority later notwithstanding, it survived,

with some temporary eclipses, for thirty years at least. It is difficult to think of Charing Cross as a sylvan retreat at this moment, but there is surely fascination for the Londoner in this description of the place by Mr. Evelyn in 1658: "The enclosure not disagreeable for the solemnness of the grove, the warblings of the birds, and as it opens in the spacious walks of St. James's," and it is recorded that ten years earlier, viz. in 1648, James Duke of York and Colonel Bamfield passed into and out of Spring Garden in making their escape from the Palace of St. James's "in the guise of gallants come to hear the nightingale." To think to-day of nightingales at Charing Cross!

There were other aspects of these gardens which commended themselves less to the sober lover of trees and solitudes, although he appears to have made much use of the place. A great deal of what is known of Spring Garden, indeed, is owing to Mr. Evelyn's recorded observations. "The thickets of the garden," he said, "seem to be contrived to all advantages of gallantry, for it is usual here to find some of the young company till midnight after they have been refreshed with the collation which is here seldom omitted at a certain cabaret in the middle of this paradise, where the forbidden fruits are certain trifling tarts, neats' tongues, salacious meats and bad Rhenish; for which the gallants pay sauce, as indeed they do at all such houses throughout England." We learn elsewhere that the collation was at the rate of six shillings a head, which, allowing for the

increased value of money and the pooriness of the Rhenish, is surely a not ungenerous figure for a meal of cold meat.

It is not surprising to learn that Spring Garden attracted the serious attention of the Puritans. The jocular doings under the trees, the wine-bibbings and the quarrels, were reasons enough for the benevolent interference of the Parliament. It is quite in the natural order of things therefore to read that "Cromwell and his partizans had shut up and seized upon Spring Garden, which till now (1654) had been ye usual rendezvous for the ladys and gallants at this season." We again quote Mr. Evelyn. In the year of the Lord Protector's death, however, the place was again in full blast, and Mr. Evelyn, after going to see a coach race in Hyde Park, "collationed in Spring Garden."

This collation, indeed, was the great attraction of the place. It was difficult in those days to get a meal anywhere away from home, the coffee-houses had not yet arisen, and most of the taverns lay far eastward of Charing Cross. Great people then lived either in the city or just out of it, and Spring Garden, with its luncheon, was a convenient halting-place for refreshment on the way to, or returning from Hyde Park, where the promenade of the ring, the foot and chariot races, were at this time great attractions. "The manner is," says Mr. Evelyn, "as the company returns (from Hyde Park) to alight at the Spring Garden . . . but the company walk in it at such a

rate you would think that all the ladies were so many Atalantas contending with their wooers."

One of the last references to the place is from the invaluable Mr. Pepys, whose fuller report on the doings there would have been very welcome. He went there, it seems, in May of 1662, with his wife's maids, "and the wenches gathered pinks. Here we staid, and seeing that we could not have anything to eate, but very dear and with long stay, we went forth again." But the days of Spring Garden were already numbered. It occurred, no doubt, to the keeper of the Privy Purse of King Charles the Second's needy Court that the situation of the place was adapted to more profitable uses, and it was soon devoted to those of building. Here arose the groups of houses first known as Inner and Outer Spring Garden, where lived a succession of people of condition till the tide of fashion again flowed westward. The name of the Spring Garden was adopted by the New Spring Gardens at Lambeth, which we examine elsewhere under the title of Vauxhall, but it still lingers about the spot where the County Council deliberates to-day upon the licensing of other forms of entertainment for Londoners.

The *al fresco* tradition of those days was supported by another garden farther west, the Mulberry Garden, which covered the site of the present Buckingham Palace and gardens. We take little account of a bowling-green opened in 1635 by "a gentleman barber," during a temporary eclipse of Spring Garden,

"in the fields behind the mews in Piccadily," because it was really a gaming establishment, "made to entertain gamesters and bowlers at an excessive rate . . . where they bowl great matches" (Gerrard to Strafford). It fulfilled the usual destiny of such places, became known as Shaver's Hall, in pleasant allusion to the "gentleman barber" who founded it, and its remains could be traced in the tennis-court at the corner of James Street until quite recent times. The Mulberry Garden, however, was of the true class of open-air entertainment, "ye only place of refreshment about ye town for persons of ye best quality to be excessively cheated at," says Mr. Evelyn in 1654, Cromwell at that time having laid his heavy hand on Spring Garden.

Although the records of the Mulberry Garden are somewhat scanty, it had certainly a great vogue during the reigns of both Charleses and the Commonwealth, for half the dramatists of the Restoration make their characters move in its walks and arbours, and eat its tarts and cakes, and it was of sufficient importance as a place of public resort to give a title to one of Sedley's comedies. There is historical record of the place also. It was quite like Charles the Second to violate his own proclamation against the drinking of toasts during a debauch at the Mulberry Garden. Mr. Pepys too was there in 1668, and found it "a very silly place, worse than Spring Garden, and but little company, only a wilderness that is somewhat pretty." But years later candid Samuel was much better pleased, the

circumstances perhaps being more propitious, for entertainment at another's expense is ever a good softener of criticism. "To the Mulberry Garden," says Samuel, "where Shere is to treat us with a Spanish Olio . . . he did do it mighty nobly, and the Olio was indeed a very noble dish such as I never saw better or any more of. We left other good things which would keep till night for a collation, and with much content took coach again, meeting The. Turner, Talbot, Batelier and his sister in a coach, and with us to the Mulberry Garden, and thereafter a walk to supper upon what was left at noon, and very good, and we mighty merry." It is in such passages as this that the memory of the place is preserved, or in the gossip of contributors to *Sylvanus Urban*, who remembered "to have eat tarts with Mr. Dryden and Madam Reeve at the Mulberry Garden, when our author advanced to a sword and chedreux wig." Wycherley, Etherege, Sedley, Shadwell, will tell us of the "pleasant divertissement" of the place; of cheesecakes and tarts and arbours and dinners "in the dining-room of Mulberry Garden House"; of ladies and gentlemen who made love together till twelve o'clock at night. The place was closed about 1674, when the *al fresco* tradition of London passed into the keeping of Vauxhall. It is worthy of note that the soil of Mulberry Garden is still open to wind and sun in the gardens of Buckingham Palace, which gives its memory a distinction rare among these old pleasaunces, which for the most part, as we shall see,

lie buried to-day under acres of unlovely bricks and mortar.

It was in those two old pleasure gardens of the Stuart times then, as we believe, that the tradition of the London *al fresco* originated. But its real development waited upon the times when England, emerging from the troublous days of the civil wars and revolutions, at last found time and opportunities for enjoyment under the more settled rule of Anne and the first Georges. There was feverish enjoyment of a sort for Londoners, of course, during those restless days of the Restoration; but an enjoyment clouded with the shadow of an impending Nemesis which was palpable to the great body of Englishmen as long as there was a full-blooded Stuart on the throne. Mr. Pepys himself felt it at one of those very gardens when the doings of Harry Killigrew and of other "very rogues" made Samuel's "heart ake," as we shall see when we come to Vauxhall. But it was only when England settled down under the wise rule of the sagacious Walpole, who first discovered the capacity of the English for managing their own affairs, that London really began to enjoy itself, and one of the first evidences of that welcome change in the national fortune was the multiplication of those popular and innocent places of open-air entertainment in and round London.

It is quite natural to find the citizen of low-lying London lifting his eyes to the hills and turning for solace from his labours chiefly to the pleasant country

which then rolled towards the sun from the heights of Hampstead and Highgate. It is difficult to-day to think of the unpromising districts now covered by Clerkenwell, Pentonville, and Islington, to say nothing of the suburbs farther north, as open country, with pastures, woods, and streams, yet such it was almost within living memory. The New River, which to-day flows into our waterpipes, and even the Fleet River, which perhaps helps to flush our sewers, were in the days of which we write streams with fat meadows, and buttercups, and placid cattle, the delight of generations of true cockneys from Holborn and the city. The springs of this upland country sloping to the Thames bubbled up in various places charged with "chalybeate" or "sulphur," as the doctors of that day believed, and provided an excuse for a dozen or more of "spas," and "waters" or "wells," each with its gardens and long room and special body of patrons, who perhaps accepted the efficacy of its waters, and certainly enjoyed the diversions of the place.

A tea garden occupied the very site of the present underground railway station at King's Cross; others jostled each other on the spot which is now a very wilderness of railway bridges and shunting grounds behind the great termini in the Euston Road. As time went on such places spread over a tract of country which included Bayswater on one hand and Stepney on the other, stretched out to Kilburn and Hampstead, Hornsey and Dalston, and studded generously the whole district so included with these open-air enter-

tainments, the names of whose springs or proprietors or attractions are yet preserved in the names of the streets which to-day cover their ancient delights.

In the very centre of that grimy district of Clerkenwell, for example, on a spot which has recently been again restored to light and air by the opening of Rosebery Avenue from the Gray's Inn Road to King's Cross Road, was situate a very typical tea garden of the last century, Islington Spa, or the New Tunbridge Wells. The place could boast a respectable antiquity before its end came, for it offered its attractions to the subjects of King James the Second and of Queen Victoria alike, and its doings provided copy for such widely separated historians of their times as Ned Ward and Pierce Egan. Like many other of the north London pleasure gardens, it owed its origin to the discovery of a spring of "chalybeate" water, and a year or so after that event there is mention of one of its early proprietors in the *London Gazette* (1685), "Mr. John Langley of London, merchant, who bought the Rhinoceros and Islington Wells." For the ten years following it had quite a vogue as a watering-place, and became the frequent theme of the poets of Grub Street, who were employed to sing its praises. When the eighteenth century opened Islington Spa was a fine going concern; to the medicinal attractions of its waters were added the amusements of a tea garden, and the amenities of the place, like those of many others, began to expand in sympathy with the more generous views of life then becoming common among

Londoners. Ned Ward will tell you of its lime trees, its coffee-house, its dancing saloon, its raffling shop, and its gaming tables. A tame doctor was kept on the premises to administer the waters, which were supplementary now to the pleasures of music, dancing, and the promenade. Islington Spa became a great place of popular resort, where city madams, sempstresses, and clerks could rub shoulders on occasion with people of a higher rank, and its arbours were much affected by city apprentices and their sweethearts with a weakness for plum cake. Other less desirable visitors followed, as was usually the case in these public places—sharpers, frail women, and pick-pockets, and even on occasion gentlemen of the road. They took my Lord Cobham's watch from him there about the middle of the century, and doings at the play-tables were not above suspicion.

Like many of its competitors Islington Spa had varying fortunes until, in 1733, in the month of May, it occurred to the Princesses Caroline and Amelia to attend regularly and take its waters. These royal ladies were duly saluted with twenty-one guns, and all London flocked to the gardens to see a real princess. Their visit brought sudden prosperity to the place; the proprietor, it was said, took £30 of a morning in entrance money alone, and Mr. Pinchbeck, the toyseller, seizing the psychological moment, did a large trade in fans bearing a representation of the place, which may still be found in collections of those interesting objects. It was in that very year that Mr.

George Bickham, jun., made a very pretty drawing of Islington Spa, and engraved it at the head of a copy of verses set to music, which celebrate some of the charms of the society which gathered there. The engraving shows the company taking the waters in a very quaint and delightful courtyard and garden, and assisted by a contemporary letter from a young lady who was there soon after we can revive the pleasures which such places afforded for our ancestors, and measure the gulf between the Islington of that day and this. "New Tunbridge Wells is a very pretty and romantick place," says the letter, "and the water much like Bath water, but makes one vastly cold and hungary." It made Lady Mary Wortley Montagu giddy and sleepy, it seems, but her ladyship left it on record that she derived much benefit from its use. Even as late as 1803 we learn from Malcolm, in that valuable work of his where are preserved so many interesting particulars of the life of the century which had just closed, that "the gardens were very beautiful, particularly at the entrance. Pedestals and vases are grouped under some extremely picturesque trees, whose foliage is seen to much advantage from the neighbouring fields." We do not doubt it; a garden of any sort of a century old has a beauty of its own, but there is pathos for a Londoner in the thought that such a picture existed in Clerkenwell during the present century. The beginning of the end, however, came soon after. Charlotte Street, afterwards Thomas Street, arose on

part of the site in 1810, and Eliza Street was built over the original entrance, a new one being made from Lloyd's Row. The gardens, thus curtailed, struggled on till 1840, when the end came by the building of two rows of houses, known as Spa Cottages. The well itself was enclosed in an outhouse of the dwelling of a former proprietor, and its waters were offered at sixpence a quart by an enterprising surgeon. It seems almost incredible that they continued to run until the year 1860. But all interested in the past of this enormous County of London will be grateful to Mr. Philip Norman and Mr. Warwick Wroth, who visited the spot independently in 1894, and after a search in the outhouse discovered a cellar containing the old spring, dry, indeed, but still surrounded by the remains of its grotto, its steps, and its balustrade, the relics of its better days.

A similar institution, which proved a formidable rival to Islington Spa, was the famous gardens of Bagnigge, opened by a Mr. Hughes in 1759, in grounds which are now covered by the Phoenix Brewery, a little north of Clerkenwell Police Court, and by part of the great building yard of the Messrs. Cubitt in the Gray's Inn Road. There were traditions of merrymaking about this pleasant spot long before Mr. Hughes made his venture. Bagnigge House, which gave its name to the gardens and wells, was a country residence of Nell Gwynn, where King Charles the Second and his brother James delighted at times to take breakfast with that lady. Mr. Hughes appears to have

discovered the capabilities of the place quite by accident. As a great amateur of gardening he was much troubled by the difficulty of growing his pansies and carnations, and in seeking for the cause he discovered that their roots were beset by the percolations of two springs of water. Analyses of these waters disclosed the fact that one was "a chalybeate of a ferruginous character, with an agreeable subacid tartness, apt to produce a kind of giddiness, and afterwards a propensity to sleep if exercise be not interposed." Thus Dr. Bevis, the analyst and adviser to Mr. Hughes. The other, we learn on the same authority, was a "carthartic, which left a distinguishable brackish bitterness on the palate," and three half pints were sufficient for most people. The ingenious Mr. Hughes sank wells to collect these health-giving streams, ran pipes into an ornamental dome supported on pillars in the classic taste, which he called the Temple, and provided Londoners with a new spa or watering-place—just as George the Third mounted the throne of his grandfather.

Such was the origin of Bagnigge Wells, a place of resort for the true-bred cockney for half a century. Nell Gwynn's dining-room, the banqueting-hall of Bagnigge House, a room of a generous spaciousness nearly eighty feet by forty, provided a pump-room or promenade. The old gardens were laid out with clipped hedges of yew; formal walks ran between alleys of box and holly; there were arbours covered with sweetbrier and honeysuckle for tea-drinking;

ponds containing gold fish, then not often seen; a fountain with Cupid bestriding a swan, and leaden statues of Phyllis and Corydon—perhaps those very figures which to-day give a quaint interest to one of the galleries of South Kensington. The Fleet River, crossed by three rustic bridges, divided the gardens into two unequal parts, the eastern and smaller portion being devoted to people whose tastes were less modish than those of the patrons of the pump-room. Here pleasant seats were provided on the banks of the stream for such “as chuse to smoake or drink cyder, ale, &c., which are not permitted in other parts of the garden.” The severity of the formal garden too, as we read, declined upon the eastern bank of the Fleet and melted away into the pleasing rusticity of willows, elder bushes, burdock and water plants, which were well known to artists seeking opportunity for the study of natural foliage.

The programme of amusement at this cockney paradise was very typical of the London *al fresco* in its prime. In the morning the place was chiefly at the disposal of the invalids who believed in the efficacy of its waters, and who, at the height of its vogue, were to be found at Bagnigge in hundreds. Many of these partook of the early breakfast which was provided for the austere ones, who drank the waters in an orthodox manner on an empty stomach. A good organ, presided over by Mr. Charles Griffiths, provided music in the pump-room for the gouty and the lame: the pump-room with its panelled walls, low ceiling, its armorial

bearings, its bust of Nell Gwynn in a niche in the wall, "bordered with festoons of fruit and flowers, moulded in delf earth, and coloured after nature," and its general pleasant flavour of antiquity. As the day wore on the invalids withdrew and the place was prepared for another class of customers. The citizens, their wives and daughters, came for their afternoon outing; the long room if the weather threatened, and the arbours if the sun shone, were filled with sober parties of shopkeepers or with boys and their sweethearts, drinking tea and eating the bread and butter and the buns baked on the ground for which the place was famous. Negus was another of the products of Bagnigge held in much favour, and there were cider and ale for the more jovial spirits who smoked under the shade of the Fleet willows and watched the games of skittles and Dutch pins which were played in the eastern part of the gardens during the long summer evenings.

It was on Sundays, however, that Bagnigge was seen at its best. Its nearness to the city, its undoubtedly pleasant surroundings, and the quasi-fashionable character imparted to the place by the patronage of the well-to-do invalids who drank its waters, made it the paradise of the city matron for a quarter of a century at least. From May till October, Holborn and Cheapside and Smithfield put on their Sunday best and emptied themselves into Bagnigge as the Sabbath afternoons came round. Half the bad poets of the last half of the century sang one aspect of the place

or another. Listen to Mr. William Woby in the
 “Shrubs of Parnassus” on its springs—

“ . . . and stil’d the place
 Black Mary’s hole, there stands a dome superb
 Hight Bagnigge, where from our forefathers hid,
 Long had two springs in dull stagnation slept ;
 But taught at length by subtle art to flow
 They rise ; forth from oblivion’s bed they rise ;
 And manifest their virtues to mankind.”

That was one way of saying what the proprietor said much more directly in his daily advertisement. “Mr. Davis takes this method to inform the publick that both the chalybeate and the purging waters are in the greatest perfection ever known and may be drank at 3d. each person, or delivered in the pump-room at 8d. per gallon. They are recommended by the most eminent physicians for various disorders as specified in the hand-bills.”

But there were not wanting versifiers of better equipment. Here is Mr. Churchill, for example, in 1779 with a metrical study quite as convincing as Mr. Davis’s prose—

“ Thy harbour Bagnigge, and the gay alcove
 Where the frail nymphs in amorous dalliance rove,
 Where ’prentice youths enjoy the Sunday feast,
 And city madams boast their Sabbath best,
 Where unfledged Templars first as fops parade,
 And new made ensigns sport their first cockade.”

The prentice’s song, too, is not without some suggestion of local colour—

“Come, prithee make it up, Miss, and be as lovers be,
We'll go to Bagnigge Wells, Miss, and there we'll have some tea;
It's there you'll see the lady-birds perched on the stinging
nettles,
And chrystal water fountains, and shining copper kettles;
It's there you'll see the fishes, more curious they than whales,
They're made of gold and silver, Miss, and wags their little
tails.”

Finally, Mr. Colman in his prologue to Mr. Garrick's “Bon Ton” gives the city madam's view of what then constituted the mode—

“Bon Ton's the space 'twixt Saturday and Monday,
'Tis riding in a one horse chair on Sunday,
'Tis drinking tea on summer afternoons
At Bagnigge Wells with china and gilt spoons.”

With these varied attractions for various classes of customers, Bagnigge during nearly half a century had a not surprising vogue. There was some attempt at a promenade in fine dresses on Sundays, where aspiring young men about town, who were not quite the mode, graduated in deportment for the brighter glories of Ranelagh and Vauxhall. There came of course the usual hangers-on of respectability, the ladies of doubtful reputation, the “bloods of humour,” copper captains, and even on occasion famous highwaymen, like the eminent John Rann, or Sixteen-stringed Jack, who was wont to display his hectoring graces in the gardens. Such incidents, however, gave a pleasant adventurous interest to a visit to Bagnigge; a highwayman, so long as he escaped the justices, was a not unpopular character, and the ordinary citizen lost no caste in

56 AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

taking a glass with one of these heroes at a tea garden or a tavern. It is recorded, however, that this particular hero gave such offence at Bagnigge on a certain Sabbath afternoon in July of 1774, that he was incontinently pitched out of the windows of the Long Room by the outraged citizens, a fall which preceded his final overthrow by Jack Ketch at Tyburn by just four months.

It is not surprising to find the artists busy with a place which attracted so much of the life of the time. There was the excellent publisher, Carrington Bowles, who preserved so much for us of the social life of the century, who has left two or three excellent mezzotints among his series. One, the Bread and Butter Manufactory, shows the fashionable Sunday parade in the long room; another, the typical citizen Mr. Deputy Dumpling and his family enjoying an afternoon in the gardens. The place is figured in the frontispieces and illustrations of many parish histories and London guide-books of a past day. Men like Sanders painted it, and engravers like I. R. Smith transferred its beauties to the copper. Finally its amenities provided subjects for many able amateurs whose sketches and drawings enrich great collections like those of Mr. Crace and the Guildhall Museum.

On the extensive piece of ground which is to-day enclosed more or less roughly by Marylebone Road, High Street, Marylebone, Weymouth Street, and Harley Street, was the other notable public garden of the northern district of London, famous for half

a century as Marylebone Gardens. We make no apology for reminding the modern Londoner that Marylebone remained a rural village until well on in the reign of George the Third, a village separated by fields from the Oxford Road, and receiving much benefit from the attractions of these gardens, which came to be much appreciated by the well-to-do and respectable people who began to build and occupy the good houses of Portman and Cavendish Squares. As in the case of the great majority of the London *al fresco* establishments, the later prosperity of the garden was reared upon the small beginnings of a tavern or public-house. The Rose of Normandy was a small place of this sort on the eastern side of the High Street, famous since Stuart times for its bowling-greens. Those same bowling-greens were acquired from the gardens of the Marylebone Manor House, which stood till 1791 on the site of the present Devonshire Mews. People of condition played bowls at the Rose until well on in the eighteenth century, and left their substance at its gaming-tables. Mr. Pepys found the Rose "a pretty place" in 1668, and Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, as Mr. Pope reminds us, spent much of his time on its pleasant lawns, dined there once a year with his friends, and was accustomed to wind up the annual proceedings with the genial toast, "May as many of us as remain unchanged meet here again next spring." There were occasional illuminations too at the Rose, and concerts of music on the king's birthday, acrobatic exhibitions, and flying men, all of which

foreshadowed features of the management of the later gardens of which the Rose was the forerunner.

It was only, however, in the summer of 1738 that the proprietor of the tavern, Mr. Daniel Gough, realising its capabilities, threw the place open to the public as an *al fresco* entertainment, and first made a regular charge of admission to what he called his "Marybone Gardens," much increased then and later by additions from the grounds of the Manor House. The venture seems to have been quite successful from the first. The evening entertainment of good music, which continued the tradition of the place, was apparently much appreciated, for in the three following years there is record of the building of a substantial garden orchestra, an organ by Bridge, and the "House or Great Room" for balls and suppers. The place attained almost immediately the dignity of the silver token or season ticket, admitting two people for the whole summer, and there is evidence of the increasing prosperity of the establishment in the progressive prices, from twelve shillings to a couple of guineas, charged for these relics, which are still to be seen at the British Museum and in other collections.

There is a very pleasant flavour of sober reasonable enjoyment by worthy and respectable people suggested by the numerous records of these old gardens—of their early years at least; of simple rational amusement in pleasant surroundings widely different from the fiercer joys of some other establishments we shall notice in the course of our inquiry. The peace-loving public

who gave the place its vogue disported themselves among the ancient trees and parterres in the old garden of the Manor House ; shady elms and planes, some of which still give dignity to the houses south of the Marylebone Road, made a pleasant retreat where they could eat their syllabubs and cake, and listen to the music of Handel and Arne. On the west they looked right on to pretty Harrow-on-the-Hill ; northward their view was bounded by the wooded heights of Hampstead and Highgate, and on the east there was nothing but green fields and open country between the gardens and the rising moon. There were surely worse conditions in which to hear "Where the Bee Sucks," or "Blow, Blow thou Winter Wind," for the first time, than surrounded by pretty faces in Marylebone Gardens in the early days of George the Third ; and London has gained little, one imagines, by the exchange of these simple pleasures for some of its amusements to-day.

Music, as we have said, was one of the great traditions of the place. From the first we hear of musical rarities at the gardens. There was Mr. Stanesby, jun., for example, who in 1738 produced "two grand bassoons, the greatness of whose sound surpass that of any other bass instrument whatever," and a little later Mr. Ferron performed on "the Pariton, an instrument never played in publick before." For thirty years, too, there was a succession of famous vocalists. Mary Anne Falkner, the pretty ballad singer, who fascinated half the young men of the middle century ; Tommy

Lowe, the tenor, whose warblings were for many seasons one of the attractions of Vauxhall, and Mrs. Vincent, who sang "Let the Merry Bells go Round," to the accompaniment of "a new instrument called the tintinnabula"; Charles Bannister gave his popular imitations of other well-known singers, anticipating a favourite entertainment of our own variety theatre; Nan Catley, the prima donna from Covent Garden; Defesch, the famous violinist; Dibdin, of Drury Lane; the fresh full voices of "the young gentlemen from St. Paul's choir," and scores of others, made the groves of Marylebone melodious for two generations. The great Handel himself was often in the gardens listening to the performances of his own cantatas, and Dr. Arne was to be seen conducting his own glees, with a visage "like two oysters in a plate of beet-root," as Mr. Sheridan unkindly recorded in describing the Doctor's eyes and complexion. Harmony and decorum were the features of Marylebone Gardens at its prime, broken rarely by a quarrel under the trees, or the rudeness of a royal visitor like the burly Duke of Cumberland.

The pleasant amenities of the place appear even in the announcements of its simple pleasures. The naïve and quaint advertisements of Miss Trusler, the daughter of one of the proprietors of the place at its best, could never have issued from the raffishness of Islington or the vulgarity of Bagnigge Wells. Said this lady in 1759, "Mr. Trusler's daughter begs leave to inform the nobility and gentry that

she intends to make fruit tarts during the fruit season, and hopes to give equal satisfaction as with the rich cakes and almond cheesecakes. The fruit will always be fresh gathered, having good quantities in the garden, and none but loaf sugar used and the finest Epping butter. Tarts of a twelvepenny size will be made every day from one to three o'clock. New and rich seed and plum cakes are sent to any part of the town." Marylebone, to be sure, was an Arcadia under the presidency of such a genius as this. It was, in fact, a place where the gentry who had country houses in the village hard by could send their children and their nursemaids in the summer days and evenings without fear of untoward molestation, and where they themselves could, and indeed often did, take their breakfast under the planes in the sun and the gentle breezes of the hayfields with which the gardens were surrounded.

Not that Marylebone was without its mild excitements on occasion. It is recorded that pretty Miss Fountayne, a relation of "Dr. Fountayne's, a dean of the Established Church," was one day taking the air in the gardens when she was saluted by a young man of a gallant bearing, who boldly kissed her before all the quality. The lady started back shocked and surprised, as in duty bound. "Be not alarmed, madam," said the gentleman, "you can now boast that you have been kissed by Dick Turpin."

On an occasion of a much later date it is painful to record that Dr. Johnson was concerned in a slight

disturbance at Marylebone. The place was then on the downward grade, and its good musical attractions had been diluted by more or less unsatisfactory displays of fireworks, displays which generally marked the beginning of the end of the better class of the London *al fresco*. The Doctor had been attracted by the fame of Mr. Torre's fireworks, and went to see them with his friend George Steevens. The afternoon had proved wet, there were few people present, and the management announced that the fireworks, "being water-soaked," could not be fired. "This," said the Doctor, "is a mere excuse to save their crackers for a more profitable company; let us both hold up our sticks and threaten to break those coloured lamps, and we shall soon have our wishes gratified. The core of the fireworks cannot be injured; let the different pieces be touched in their respective centres and they will do their offices as well as ever." Moved by this very Johnsonian eloquence, some young men broke the lamps; but the respective centres of the different pieces remained untouched, and the uninjured cores still refused to do their offices. Such troubles, however, were rare at Marylebone, and its decorous joys, its harmonious concerts, its simple banquets of syllabubs and negus, of coffee and plumcake, are the theme of a score of kindly allusions in the memoirs and diaries of the past. Its groves and its great room, its latticed arbours and its fine company are reflected in the fine engraving published by J. Tinney in 1755, and many knowing connoisseurs contend that its simple

beauty inspired the lovely painting by George Morland called the "Tea Garden," the plate after which by Smith is now one of the prizes of the sale rooms.

We have described at some length these three old places of amusement, because they are, as we believe, typical specimens of the very numerous class of similar establishments, usually of smaller extent and fewer pretensions, but still having each its own special attraction for a special body of patrons, and each with a record of prosperity, fleeting often, but real at one stage or other of its career. There was often a prodigious competition between neighbouring establishments. Islington Spa, for example, had an enterprising competitor at its very gates in the London Spa, a name given to a spring discovered in a tavern garden on a spot marked now by the junction of Exmouth Street and Rosoman Street. This institution was advertised by its proprietor, Mr. Halhead, as as good, if not better, than the opposition affair over the way "so mightily cry'd up." He produced something in the shape of a garden, and London Spa became famous as a rendezvous of milkmaids on May day. His "chalybeate," when brewed, made ale of a surpassing richness, with which the pleasure-seekers of the Welch Fair in the adjoining Spa Fields were accustomed to wash down the orthodox dish of roast pork eaten at those merry-makings in pleasant derision of the Jews. Within a hundred yards of the London Spa were the New Wells, with a reputation from quite early times for a quasi theatrical and spectacular entertainment.

Here, by ordering a pint of wine, you could hear Mr. Blogg sing the "Early Horn" or "Mad Tom" to a kettledrum obligato; or gaze upon a "fine collection of large rattlesnakes, one having nineteen rattles; a young crocodile imported from Georgia, and a cat between the tyger and leopard, perfectly tame." As time went on history was reflected in the entertainments of the New Wells. Admiral Vernon captured Portobello again; the Duke of Cumberland as "Courage" suppressed the rebels of the "Forty-Five," and that surprising lady, Hannah Snell, who served as a marine, by the name of James Grey, at the siege of Pondicherry, and had been wounded more than once, went through "her military exercises in her regimentals."

At the Mulberry Gardens, again, in Clerkenwell, a place of generous size, with a clear pond of water and a great mulberry tree with seats to watch the skittle players, you could hear "honest Jo Baker beat a trevally on his side drum the very same that he beat before his Grace the Lord Duke of Marlborough after the battle of Malplaquet." The Mulberry Gardens had their John Bull proprietor with a genius for advertisement, who engaged British musicians only, as holding that "the manly vigour of our own native music is more suitable to the ear and heart of a Briton than the effeminate softness of the Italian." The honest joys of the Mulberry Gardens in due season were blotted out by the House of Detention, and now the present huge pile of the quadrangle of the existing

Clerkenwell School-board buildings occupies the site of its once pleasant shades.

At the Lord Cobham's Head, off the present Farringdon Street, anglers might find board and lodging on reasonable terms, a pleasant garden with shady groves of trees, and "a fine canal stocked with very good carp and tench fit to kill." Farther east, too, just off what is now Old Street, behind St. Luke's Hospital, was Perilous or Parlous Pool, a place so named because in Elizabethan times "divers youths by swimming therein have been drowned." For a century and a half Perilous Pool was a noted place for the joys of duck hunting, until in 1743 a man named Kemp changed its name to Peerless Pool and made of it a resort for perspiring citizens for another century. He embanked the pool, surrounded it with a grove of trees, provided it with marble steps and a marble vestibule for dressing, "with a small library of light literature," made of it in fact a fine open air swimming-bath of sixty yards by thirty, and had his reward in a flourishing subscription and a body of patrons who paid two shillings for a single bath. Besides the swimmers, he attracted the support of another class by constructing a grand artificial canal stocked with carp, tench, and other fish for cockney sportsmen. Baldwin Street occupies the site of that canal to-day, and the name of the bathing-place, which remained open until the middle of the present century, still lingers in that of "Peerless Row."

Roam, indeed, where you will about those vast acres of brick and mortar of the northern half of the great

County of London, if you have still heart for the enterprize, and you will find its most unlovely holes and corners teeming with the memories of these well-nigh forgotten places of pleasure. The present inferno of the Metropolitan station at King's Cross is excavated from the once famous gardens of St. Chad's Well, where a century and a half ago hundreds drank its medicinal waters of a morning and its tea of an afternoon, without the fear of typhoid before their eyes. The great surgeon Abernethy was often to be seen at St. Chad's Well, and the local Dr. Blimber, "Mr. Measall, the master of Gordon House Academy, Kentish Town, was used to march his young gentlemen once a week to take the waters" and so save doctor's bills. Stand amongst the railway arches and shunting grounds at the back of St. Pancras Station and realise, if you can, the pleasant gardens of Pancras Wells in the middle of hayfields, with a view of the northern heights of Primrose Hill and Hampstead, reckoned fine, the old church of St. Pancras on its borders, and footpaths from Gray's Inn in full view of the gardens, whence the proprietor could count his customers approaching and form his estimate of their wants. Pancras Wells, too, had a competitor at its gates in the Adam and Eve Tea Garden, where they kept cows for the making of syllabubs, and men played trapball of a summer evening and the children watched a little squadron of toy frigates on the pond.

Eastward again, in Pentonville, stood White Conduit House, in a space bounded approximately to-day

by the present Penton Street, Cloudesley Road, Alton Street, and Denmark Road, another of the great tea gardens in the north which vied with Bagnigge and Marylebone. Here did generations of citizens partake of "hot loaves, tea, coffee, and liquors in the greatest perfection, and milk from cows which eat no grains," enjoy the views from the windows in the Long Room, "from whence is the most copious prospects and airy situation of any now in vogue," as the proprietor was careful to point out. White Conduit House had its "pleasing walks prettily disposed," its "genteel boxes," with paintings in the Flemish manner, its alcoves let into its clipped hedges, and its avenues of shady trees, and was the delight of numbers of Londoners for a century. It had also its own code of deportment. It was reckoned the mode at White Conduit House to tread on the skirt of the damsel whose acquaintance you wished to make, apologise for your clumsiness, and suggest an adjournment to an arbour for tea by way of amends. White Conduit House, too, has an interest of its own for most Englishmen, for did not Mr. Bartholomew the proprietor, in 1754, provide bats and balls for his customers, and encourage the game of cricket in the adjoining meadow, and so lay the foundations of the vast organisation of the modern game? There is no doubt about it at all. The place continued the headquarters of cricket in London for twenty years; men of condition played their matches there, and in 1784 the club which met in that meadow included the Duke

of Dorset, Lord Winchilsea, Lord Talbot, Colonel Tarleton, and no less a light of the cricket world than Thomas Lord, the founder of the Marylebone Club.

The history of these and a score of other entertainments in the open air is recorded in the fugitive literature of their times, admirably collected and arranged in works like that of Mr. Warwick Wroth of the British Museum, with its orderly references and authorities which make it a model of what such a work should be. In such records you may learn how the "Three Hats" at Islington was perhaps the home of the modern equestrian entertainment, afterwards brought to perfection by Philip Astley, where "Johnson the Irish Tartar rode a single horse standing on his head;" how citizens with a taste for the placid old game of bowls went to Dobney's in the Pentonville Road, to the Belvidere Tea Gardens hard by, to the Black Queen Coffee House and Tea Gardens, Shacklewell Green, or to Cuper's Gardens over the river. Dobney, we find by the way, had another curious attraction about 1772, when Mr. Daniel Wildman, the Bee Master, gave a fearsome exhibition on horseback, "standing upright, one foot on the saddle and the other on the horse's neck, with a curious mask of bees on his face; he also rides, standing upright on the saddle, with the bridle in his mouth, and by firing a pistol makes one part of the bees march over a table and the other swarm in the air and return to their places again."

Each one of all these humble places had some

special attraction of its own. There was Copenhagen House, on the site of the Clock Tower of the Cattle Market at Islington, famous for its fives, where John Cavanagh, the prince of fives players, whose fine play is commemorated in an essay of Hazlitt's, was wont to astonish spectators with his skill at the game, eschewing the volley, "but seldom missing a return off the ground, though it rose no more than an inch." There is a human story of the origin of fives at Copenhagen House, telling how the maid of the tavern, hailing from Shropshire, meeting an acquaintance from the same county, and talking over the game, which was one of the diversions of their native place, improvised a fives ball, made an appointment for a day later, and played a game against the end of the house, which delighted the onlooking toppers and so started the tradition of fives at Copenhagen House. The very gable where the maid and her friend played their historic game remained the theatre of the famous contests which followed, and the cooks in the kitchen were said to recognise the severe returns of Cavanagh on the wall, and, "as the meat trembled on the spits," to remark, "There's the Irishman again."

All the roads, indeed, that led out of London to the north and west, were avenues which led pleasure-seekers to open air entertainments of one sort or another. Belsize House was a country mansion on the west side of Haverstock Hill, opened in 1720 by a Welshman "with an uncommon solemnity of music and dancing," with a park wilderness and

70 AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

garden a mile in circumference "filled with a variety of birds which compose a most melodious and touching harmony," as we are assured. Cakes and ale were much in evidence at Belsize House, and foot and galloway races "six times round the course." In 1726 they "hunted a fat doe to death with small beagles," when sportsmen were invited "to bring their own dogs if not too large."

Farther north still was Hampstead with its famous wells and gardens, and a local clergyman and chapel for those amorous couples who could not afford the journey to Gretna Green. Its later Assembly Room with its fugitive fashion is embalmed in much of the fiction of the last part of the century, and there Mr. Samuel Rogers "danced minuets in his youth and met a great deal of good company." Visits to Hampstead in those days were in the nature of an expedition which called for the services of the daily stage coach. Perhaps the most northerly point of attraction for pleasure-loving Londoners was the Spaniards Tavern, unless Kilburn Wells or New Gorgia in Turner's Wood, or Hornsey Wood House, could claim that distinction. The Spaniards had its pebble walks laid out by the ingenious Mr. Staples with curious devices of the Signs of the Zodiac, the Tower of London, Adam and Eve, and the Great Pyramids and its "prospect of Hanslope Steeple within eight miles of Northampton and Langdon Hill in Essex, full sixty miles east," unless the imagination of its advertisers betrayed them. Between these outposts and the

Thames, Bayswater Gardens in the Bayswater Road on the west, and Spring Garden in the Mile End Road on the east, there were a dozen or it may be a score of similar places which claim and receive attention in a history of the town, but must be passed over here with such mention.

We have been concerned so far with the places of entertainment which flourished on the *al fresco* tastes of the Londoner at various periods, but nearly all lying on the north side of a line continued east and west of what is now approximately Oxford Street. It was on this side of London that the *al fresco* tradition of the tea garden attained its greatest splendour, mainly, as we believe, from the natural love of a town dweller for rising ground and brisk air, partly from the variety which two little rivers gave to that country, and also by reason of the attractions of the semi-fashionable crowds who at times gathered round one or other of its numerous spas.

South London, however, was not without its open air attractions, which had a flavour of their own, differing widely from that of the places we have already considered. The attractions of the South London districts were less simple and less respectable. With an unconscious humour, many of them advertised their mineral waters in competition with the spas of the north; waters pumped from wells which would fill at a few feet below the surface of what was practically the huge marsh between Rotherhithe and Vauxhall; waters which Dr. Rendle opines could have been

nothing more than the mere soakage of a swamp. But their main attractions were more or less feeble imitations of the glories of Vauxhall, and their patrons were, speaking generally, of a less innocent cast of mind and less easily amused than the citizens who flocked northward to Islington or Hampstead, or westward to Marylebone.

One of the chief of the South London group which shared with the peerless Vauxhall the distinction of an approach by water, was Cuper's Garden, on the south side of Waterloo Bridge, through the very centre of which modern progress drove the Waterloo Bridge Road. Cuper's Garden took its name from an old servant of the Howard family, who, just at the end of the seventeenth century, laid out a big patch of the marsh land with walks and bowling-greens, contrived to give it some flavour of dignity and distinction by dotting the place with mutilated statues presented to him by his patron upon the demolition of Arundel House, and opened the place as a public garden, which had a measure of success for some sixty or seventy years. At first music and dancing were the chief attractions, and 'prentices and sempstresses the chief of its patrons, and there is a not untuneful set of verses which reflect some of the simple joys of those early days, beginning—

“'Twas down in Cupid's Gardens
For pleasure I did go,
To see the fairest flowers
That in that garden grow.”

But under subsequent proprietors, notably one Ephraim Evans and his widow, the place developed more upon the lines of Vauxhall, with orchestras, fireworks, and illuminations, and promenades under the trees, where "pretty young women were accustomed to parade dressed like young men, and wearing swords." Such diversions at times attracted a deal of fashionable company, Horace Walpole and the Prince of Wales among others, who gave distinction to the assembly and occupation to the pickpockets. It was upon that rock of careless management that Widow Evans, "a well-looking, comely person," finally split, when the Act of 1752 established authorities for the "better regulating of places of public entertainment," and licences became necessary for such as Widow Evans. Cuper's Garden was refused a licence amidst the lamentations of the widow, who was forced to retire upon the tavern and a mere tea garden. The widow was apparently a woman of some resource, for when her orchestra was thus silenced she advertised her tea and the subdued attractions of the place, with the remark that there still "remained some harmony from the sweet enchanting sounds of the rural warblers."

Finch's grotto was another South London garden in what is now the Southwark Bridge Road, where the proprietor, Finch, inheriting a house and garden, was not long in discovering the inevitable spring of medicinal water, and made "a grotto and a natural and beautiful cascade," aspired to the dignity of season tickets, and returned a modicum of refreshment, "half a pint of

wine, cake, jelly, or cyder," in exchange for the one shilling admission. Stray royalties, like the wild York and the silly Gloucester, would come to listen to the music at Finch's, or perhaps to gaze at the singers of such beauty and notoriety as Sophia Baddeley of Drury Lane and Vauxhall, the heroine of many wicked stories of those days.

The present Spa Road, Bermondsey, takes its name from Bermondsey Spa Gardens, where Mr. Keyse, the self-taught painter, enclosed some acres of waste ground, discovered the usual spa, and with his pictures of green-grocers' stalls and butchers' shops, his cheery personality, his cheery brandy, his lamps in imitation of Vauxhall, his prima donnas and burlettas, contrived to keep the place open for thirty years. At the Helena Gardens, Rotherhithe, the tradition of the *al fresco* lingered perhaps latest of all. There singers warbled and dancers capered, infant prodigies of six delighted or bored audiences, and orchestras scraped until the year 1881. At the Belvidere Gardens, just above Cuper's Garden, on the Thames, the proprietor advertised "the choicest river fish which they (his patrons) may have the delight to see taken." The Flora Gardens, the Temple of Apollo, and the Temple of Flora were classically named establishments near what is now the Westminster Bridge Road, one with an "Apollonian promenade and a pallid moon between brilliant transparencies," and claiming credit for "the superior excellencies of music and wines, and the chastity and dignity of the place," all of which virtues and

advantages, however, did not avert the suppression of the place by the magistrates in 1793. The Dog and Duck, St. George's Spa, on the site of the present Bethlehem Hospital, was an *al fresco* entertainment which had its origin in the popular sport of duck hunting, ran through the whole gamut of mineral water, tea gardens, musical entertainments, and fireworks, and expired finally in an atmosphere of raffishness and blackguardism.

To conclude, and not to omit mention of any notable district which was a centre of *al fresco* entertainment, we may notice the little group of tea gardens for which Chelsea was famous: Strombolo House, the beauty of whose fireworks enabled the proprietor to charge the high price of half a crown for admission, and anticipate the glories of the Crystal Palace to-day; Jenny's Whim, with its bowling-green, cock-pit, and ducking-pond, its alcoves and prim flower-beds, its pond where mechanical mermaids and fishes rose at intervals to the surface, and its recesses where Harlequin and Mother Shipton started up when an unseen spring was trodden upon by the visitor. Finally Brompton had its Florida Gardens just west of Gloucester Road, on the south side of the present Cromwell road, a rural retreat with clipped hedges, terraces, and shady walks, "well adapted for gallantry and intrigue," where Mr. Hiem grew cherries, strawberries, and flowers, supplied "fresh fruit every hour in the day, ice creams, wine, cyder, tea and coffee," also "Berne Veckley, an elegant succedaneum for bread and butter, and eat by the noblesse of Switzerland."

It was among the delights of such places as these which we have endeavoured to visit in the spirit that former generations of Londoners took their modest pleasures and the life of a couple of centuries of London displayed itself. As a conclusion to our inquiry it may be of interest to speculate for a moment on the causes of their decline. It would be easy to account for the disappearance of the old London pleasure gardens by pointing to the necessities in the matter of building sites of a town which, since the first vogue of the *al fresco* entertainment, has grown into a province—a province of bricks and mortar. But such a proposition would be merely plausible, because it is certain that the London tea garden was moribund before cheap corn created a vast population, and easy communications distributed it in very unequal patches over a country where most interests of beauty or enjoyment have been sacrificed to the exigencies of an industrial commercialism. The decline of the London *al fresco*, we believe, followed a change in the taste of the people themselves, that taste itself an inevitable consequence of an increasing population and an increasing prosperity. The simple pleasures which satisfied the London of Charles the Second left the London of George the Third unmoved, and the pleasure-seeking citizen of the London of William the Fourth had a soul altogether above the placid joys of the London of George the Third. If you seek conviction on the point, read Pepys and Horace Walpole, Harry Angelo, Pierce Egan and Captain Gronow, and compare the

different accounts of the pleasures of the town by each of those recording angels.

It is quite easy to trace this change of taste in the records of any of the old places of amusement we have been considering. There was always the increasing splendour of Vauxhall to be reckoned with by the managers of them all, a sort of bull amongst tea gardens, against which every frog as time went on found it necessary to distend itself, and usually burst in the process. And so we find the harmless dissipations of the teapot and muffin gradually supplanted by fare of a headier character, and the simple pleasures of the organ in the Long Room, the ballad-singer, and the prim decorum of the promenade yielding to joys of a fiercer kind and forgathering of a different character, a change which led often to presentations by grand juries and contests with magistrates, and a change invariably ominous of the end. At Bagnigge Wells the Long Room became a concert-room, where serio-comics gave "turns" much as they do at the Pavilion to-day, and balloon ascents in the garden became necessary to tickle the jaded palates of spectators surfeited by promenades among clipped hedges and fountains. For years before White Conduit House had closed its gates, forgotten and unregretted, it had run through the whole changes of a variety entertainment and the amusements of a country fair. The fish-pond had been drained and filled in to make room for a dancing saloon dedicated to Apollo, the healthy joys of the early place, with its cricket and

white bread, had been exchanged for cheap fireworks, tight ropes, and conjurers like Mr. Chabert, who swallowed arsenic, oxalic acid, boiling oil and molten lead, and "entered a large heated oven supported on four pillars and there cooked a leg of lamb and a rump steak," which he obligingly divided among the spectators. Grand galas there and elsewhere rendered necessary the attendance of vigilant officers to prevent the entry of "persons in dishabille." At the delightful and decorous Marylebone, conjurers' entertainments and "Forges of Vulcan" in pasteboard and red-fire took the place of Acis and Galatea and "Where the bee sucks," and *fêtes champêtres*, "which consisted of nothing more than a few tawdry festoons and extra lamps," only moved more sophisticated audiences to resent the extra charge of five shillings by breaking the lamps and demolishing the scenery. The careers of the less famous gardens of the south and the west were almost invariably concluded in even less reputable circumstances, where the conduct of the raffish audiences attracted by their debased pleasures brought upon them the interference of the authorities.

There were others, of course, which were merely absorbed by the advancing wilderness of London, which planted gasometers in their pleasant parterres and dried up their springs for ever. Of these the elegists are topographers and antiquarians like Mr. Hone and Mr. J. T. Smith, who witnessed and regretted their departed glories. There is an almost touching description, for instance, by Mr. Smith of his visit to Bermondsey Spa

in the days of its decline: Smith himself the only visitor, with his solemn banter of the artist proprietor's pictures of savoy cabbages and knuckles of veal, and the prima donna in silks and rouge singing her solo according to contract and bowing her thanks for the applause of the audience of one. Hone will tell you of the forlorn aspect of St. Chad's Wells when its waters remained undrunk and its patrons had sought their pleasure elsewhere; of the "scene which the unaccustomed eye might take for the pleasure-ground of Giant Despair;" of "trees standing as if not meant to vegetate, and nameless weeds straggling weakly upon unweeded borders."

Such, however, were only the lamentations on the short period of the decline of a phase of social life which had fulfilled a purpose and had amused a large proportion of the inhabitants of London for two hundred years. It is pleasant sometimes to think about the London *al fresco* in its prime, and the delight and enthusiasm of Londoners in the simple pleasures it afforded, an enthusiasm which surely inspired the poet who sang the beauties of the New River in those haunting lines—

"Farewell, sweet vale, how much thou dost excel
Arno or Andalusia."

It is pleasant at times, as we say, to call their forgotten pleasures to mind, to trace their forgotten boundaries, and to hope perhaps for their resurrection in a translated form. We may remember, if we choose, that

London has received and is receiving, in exchange, parks and open spaces on a splendid scale, generously, and even royally administered in every respect except that of provision for its hunger and thirst. Mr. Pepys we feel convinced, could he revisit his beloved town, would not be enthusiastic about the buns and ginger-beer of, say, Regent's Park, or think that he had made in those viands a good exchange for Shere's Spanish olio at the Mulberry Garden. There are signs, however, that the taste for the *al fresco* amongst Londoners is not extinct; the success of such enterprises as the concerts at the Imperial Institute, at Earl's Court and elsewhere, the breakfasting in Battersea Park connected with the fashionable cycling of a few years ago, even the much abused Summer Club of Kensington Gardens, may be taken as signs of the times.

THE ROYAL MASQUERADE, SOMERSET HOUSE

DRAWN BY WILLIAM HOGARTH



CHAPTER III

THE MASKED ASSEMBLY

CURIOUS antiquaries will tell you that human nature has delighted in seizing every opportunity of disguising itself ever since the doings of mankind provided material for their interesting researches. Whatever your epoch or your nationality might have been, had you encountered the misfortune of being born out of the present incomparable age, your religion, your pleasure, your prudery, or your wantonness, would have prompted you at one time or other to throw off your workaday dress, to hide your features in a mask or domino, and conceal your identity for a time in the habit and bearing of some one else. The erudite Monsieur Pierre Larousse is of opinion that mankind first took to changing its clothes as a relief from misery. "*Il semble que l'homme ait voulu de tout temps échapper ses misères en changeant d'habits.*" He began, it would seem, by dressing himself up in the garments which he attributed to his gods, and if his gods were none he was accustomed to divest himself of the habiliments which his own daily life required. But there were surely many other motives at work than an attempt at an escape from misery in this per-

petual changing of garments. We doubt, for instance, whether it was misery which drove the ancients to disguise themselves for those surprising rites called Bacchanalia and Saturnalia, both of which functions we are assured were early instances of the masquerade or masked assembly. The carnivals, *fêtes des fous*, and *fêtes des innocents* of the Middle Ages were later examples of the masked assembly, as we are told, and all survivals of the Pagan rites, slyly adapted by the priests to the usages of the Christian Church, and inspired always by the eternal love of the human kind for disguise.

The fascination of the domino, indeed, is over all the ages, and has lent itself to every species of human interest or passion or design. An Inquisitor or an officer of the Vehmgericht put on a mask as he prepared some extra refinement of torture for his victim. A bravo who set out to earn a few pieces by sticking a knife into some superfluous lover serenading a girl in a Venetian balcony, slunk off in cloak and vizard. The same interesting article of dress was very useful to the sportive dame of the Restoration, who enjoyed the jokes of Wycherley or Sedley at the play, and wore the mask to conceal such blushes as those jokes produced, or to hide the fact that the wearer was already past blushing. The disguise of a fancy character was a convenient and favourite means of intercourse between the amorous swains and maidens of the carnivals, bals masqués, or masquerades, stories of which enliven the social records of every civilised nation since modern history began to be written. Claude Duval or

James Maclane found the black velvet of much assistance when they set out to lift purses on Hounslow Heath or Banstead Downs. The same protection gave the same feeling of security to the artists whose unpopular duty it was to relieve Mary Stuart, say, or Raleigh, or King Charles of their heads. The palmy days of disguises of all sorts and for all purposes were over before the present century began, but you may still trace certain aspects of the cult of the masquerade, shorn indeed of most of its ancient glory, but still of true pedigree, in the calico dances of the modern suburban villa and the rather dreary functions at Covent Garden Theatre. The practical use of the vizard, too, is revived occasionally in these prosaic days, when a Ribbonman waits for a landlord behind a fence with a blunderbuss, or Captain Moonlight places a land-grabber against a stone wall and shoots his legs from under him.

A consideration of all that has been recorded of the proceedings of people who have adopted disguises of one sort or another, for one of the hundred motives which have suggested their use, would convince the most innocent and amiable of critics that very little of good has ever been done in disguise. It was pleasantly held by an essayist of the last century that the first masquerade known and recorded was that change of personality which resulted in such disaster in the Garden of Eden. Developing the idea, this correspondent of the *Gentleman's Magazine* claimed the circumstances and environment of that entertainment to prove that the *Ridotto al fresco* with which Mr. Jonathan

Tyers delighted his patrons in the gardens of Vauxhall in the reign of George the Second was no new thing. It is an ingenious theory, like many others which appeared under the auspices of Sylvanus Urban, and, if true, would account for much that took place in masquerade in later times. There was much eating of forbidden fruit of various sorts, revelry and diversion of a distinctly worldly kind, by the people who made a practice of dressing themselves up in the habits of other times and personalities. The decorum which we may hope regulated their ordinary living was, as a rule, most certainly left behind with their ordinary dress when they assumed the domino and took their chair to the *bal masqué*, the masquerade, or the *Ridotto*.

It is worthy of note that the masked assembly was never an institution which had any great vogue among the common people, either in this country or elsewhere. The wearing of masks or of disguises in private life was from very early times the exclusive privilege of the great or of those who imitated them. It was in Italy, and at Venice especially, that the wearing of the vizard or domino first grew out of the practices of the Carnival into a habit with people of condition, that Carnival itself being, as we suggest, a development of the quasi heathenish fêtes of the mediæval church. Here as elsewhere it was the noble, or the man of fashion, or the professional adventurers of both sexes, who adopted the motley for the purposes of intrigue or pleasure, and seldom the merchant or shopkeeper. In France, too, as soon as there was any sign of the people avail-

ing themselves of the diversions which the public use of the mask provided for their betters, the great powers stepped in and made regulations confining its use to their own order. In that happy country, it was ordained in 1535 that no citizen should be allowed to appear masked, save during the Carnival, under pain of death, and whole shopfuls of vizards and dominos were seized and confiscated. The French nobles, headed by the king himself, might ruffle it about the streets of Paris, kiss honest Matthieu's daughter and lift Matthieu over the quay into the Seine if they saw fit, but if honest Matthieu availed himself of the same convenient disguise for his own purposes of pleasure or revenge, they took off his head, as when two unfortunate citizens suffered that fate for that particular crime at Toulouse, so late as 1626. So too when the vizard was put to quite innocent uses in the England of Tudor times as a covering for a lady's face, both as protection from wind and from the free glances of the gallants, it was confined to women of social position; and the less innocent proceedings which flourished under its kindly shelter in later days were those of the highly placed and leisured classes. The virtues and vices of the mask were thus in all times and countries the virtues and vices of a small and particular section of the community. Such as they were, they descended from above and did not ascend from below, and at their best or worst they never succeeded in penetrating more than a few of the upper strata of society. It is our interesting task in

this chapter to follow the records of the use of the mask or domino or fancy dress in England.

The vogue of the masked assembly was long in reaching this country, and the masquerade had been a favourite diversion of generations of continentals before its introduction here. It is quite in accordance with its modish reputation to find the masquerade introduced to Englishmen under the highest auspices. "On the daie of the Epiphany at night," says Hall's Chronicle of the year 1513, "the king, with eleven others, were disguised after the manner of Italie, called a maske, a thing not seen afore in England. They were apparelled in garments long and brod, wrote all with golde, and visers, and cappes of golde, and after the banket done, these maskers came in with the six gentlemen disguised in silk, bearing staffe torches, and desired the ladies to dance. Some were content, and some that knew the fashion of it refused, because it was not a thing commonly seen, and after thei danced and commoned together, as the fashion of the masks is, they took their leave and departed, and so did the queen and all the ladies."

We have here an early record of the true masked assembly in England, undeveloped as yet into the masquerade which, as we shall see, was an exotic and very striking feature of the fashionable amusement of London of the eighteenth century, but still exhibiting on a small scale the essential qualities of that entertainment. The true masquerade was a gathering of people every one of whom was in disguise, and its

attraction consisted wholly of whatever diversion the ingenuity or the freedom of its members could extract from that condition. The masque which Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones provided for the diversion of the court was a different affair altogether, theatrical and spectacular in its essential character, where the maskers were actors who provided amusement for a separate audience, as at any other theatrical entertainment. In the masquerade proper the company were at once actors and audience together, and in the light of the subsequent experience of the English in its pleasantries, the fact that those ladies of Henry's court "who knew the fashion" refused to dance with the maskers is not without eloquence.

The masked assembly thus introduced into England under distinguished auspices was still many years in establishing its vogue. It was, as we have said, an exotic, a plant of foreign origin, reared originally in a country devoted to the superstitions of Papistry, and finding little to agree with it in the robust air of England after the Reformation. There is little recorded of masked assemblies during the later times of the Tudors, or, for that matter, during the more genial days of the Stuarts. The rising Puritan feeling in the days of Charles the First was shocked by a masque encouraged by Queen Henrietta Maria at Whitehall on a Sunday in February of 1634. This was not a true masquerade, but a masque presented by the members of the Inns of Court as a protest against Mr. Prynne's condemnation of the stage and of women

actors, when he alluded to the queen's rehearsal of Mr. Montague's "Shepherd's Pastoral," an animadversion which cost that patriot his ears. The queen, however, made the occasion a hybrid between a masque and a masquerade by giving her royal hand to one of the maskers in the dance. The crowd were incapable of drawing fine distinctions, and objected to the appearance of the lawyers in disguise, especially on the Sabbath. "The detestation of disguise natural to a freeborn Briton, and the profanation of the Lord's Day, so decently observed among us," as we read, "roused the indignation of the publick so as to cause an insurrection in Whitehall." The people opposed her Majesty's guards, her Majesty's guards dragooned the people, a scuffle ensued, "and about half-a-dozen of the people were killed of one side and two or three guards of the other," a very unhappy ending indeed to that afternoon's pleasure of the queen and the Inns of Court.

It is not at all singular that the masquerade should have languished during the stormy days which followed; there was little place even for very modest joys in the London of Puritan England, and still less for such anathema as the mixture of the sexes in the unholy diversions of a company all in disguise, where the innocence of a young quaker might find itself in very embarrassing circumstances with the best will in the world, and the freedoms of youth and wantonness had the best possible opportunities for displaying themselves in their most luxurious form. But the

Restoration, with its laughter-loving court and its opportunities for the Catholic religion, with its bevy of beauties at Whitehall ready for any cantrips in the world, was an epoch which one would have thought favourable for the development of this attractive form of amusement. And yet Pepys and Evelyn and De Grammont are strangely silent on the matter. There was no vogue of the masquerade as yet, so much is clear from their pages. But they all make mention of an entertainment at court which makes it plain that the diversion introduced to England by King Henry the Eighth was still alive within its shores.

It was in February of 1664 that Mrs. Pickering told Mr. Pepys "of the manner of a masquerade before the king and court the other day where six women, my Lady Castlemaine and the Duchess of Monmouth being two of them, and six men, the Duke of Monmouth and Lord Arran and Monsieur Blanfort being three of them, in vizards and in costly and antique dresses did dance admirably and most gloriously." Evelyn was there himself. "I saw a masque performed at court by six gentlemen and six ladies surprising his Majesty, it being Candlemas Day." From De Grammont we learn some particulars of the entertainment. It was a device of the good-natured Queen Catherine of Braganza, it seems, to amuse the king, and no surprise to his Majesty, who knew all about it. Some of the lighter spirits of that reckless company seized the occasion for tricks which were quite prophetic of the later developments of the masquerade.

Miss Hamilton feigned the queen's handwriting in a letter to Lady Muskerrey, who was fat and had one leg shorter than the other, and commanded her ladyship to dress in a habit of a lady of Babylon. De Grammont tells us of the poor lady's search among the Levant merchants of the city for particulars of such a dress, of her appearance outside the palace asking every courtier who entered if he was her partner, of De Grammont himself, a little late, making his joke about the "phantom masker" he had met outside to the king, "the masker with at least sixty ells of silver tissue about her, not to mention a sort of pyramid upon her head adorned with a hundred baubles." Miss Hamilton was rather frightened at her joke when the king commanded the strange masker to be introduced, and Lord Muskerrey recognising his foolish lady in De Grammont's description rushed out of the room on that errand and conducted the poor creature out of harm's way. Such was the typical fun of the court of Charles the Second, and we shall see as we proceed that this flavour of cross purposes and confusion of personalities was very typical also of the final development of the masquerade in England a hundred years later.

It is upon such scanty material as is furnished by the gossip of these writers that we have to rely in tracing the origin and progress of the masked assembly in England. Sometimes in turning an old magazine or newspaper there is to be found some slight record which helps us. There is a bill set out in *Notes and*

Querries which carries on the tradition to 1673, a bill for "masquerading cloaths made by William Watts deceased, by his Majesty's order, and His Majie. also ordered the Duke of Monmouth to bespeake them." The bill included "a rich flowered venetian suite laced with silver lace and all furnitures, £59, 17s."—this for Mr. Sands. Mr. Hazzard, Mr. Isaac, Mr. Preist, and Mr. Caine had each "the like in all particulars," and "four bask habitts more at £11, 11s. per piece." Another gentleman paid for a "sheapherds habitt with all furnitures £30, 7s. 10d.," and a "Divell's shape" for Mr. Hazzard cost him £5, 15s. 6d. Mr. Hazzard thus had three suits for one occasion, a fact which teaches us that the masquerade had reached its development as early as 1673, for one of the chief delights of a wealthy man seeking his pleasure at the masquerade of the eighteenth century at the King's Theatre or at Mrs. Cornely's was to appear successively in two or three different dresses on the same evening.

It was only, however, when England began to settle down at the beginning of the last century that the masquerade established itself and became noticeable among the amusements of the town. Addison and Steele were on the spot to take note of its first public appearance in their *Tatlers* and *Spectators*, and their humorous moralisings on the subject leave us in no doubt whatever as to the nature of those early assemblies. It is quite easy to fill in our outline of the typical English masquerade from those pleasant pages where one or other of the authors projects him-

self into some fancied character whose personality should give point to the speculations he wishes to convey to his readers. Addison is "a Director of the Society for the Reformation of Manners," Steele is "the Undertaker of the Masquerade;" Addison again will assume the character of a "future historian" living in our own times, only the better to look back and touch the events of his own with his gentle satire.

The *Spectator* had appeared no longer than a week when he laid his finger upon the "midnight mask which has of late been frequently held in one of the most conspicuous parts of the town, and which I hear will be continued with additions and improvements." The conspicuous part of the town here mentioned, as we learn from a contemporary advertisement, was a public room in Spring Gardens, where it was announced as an "evening entertainment, and no persons admitted unmasked or armed."

The fashionable character of the partakers in this modish dissipation is humorously suggested in Addison's pleasant banter. "As all the persons who compose this lawless assembly are masked we dare not attack any of them in our way, lest we should send a woman of quality to Bridewell or a peer of Great Britain to the Compter," wrote Addison as "Director of the Society for the Reformation of Manners." There happens to be corroboration of the truth of these remarks, which is an eloquent commentary upon the character of the people attending these early meetings, and also upon the reluctance of the authorities of

those days to bring highly placed people into disrepute. A few years later there was a raid by the officers upon a notorious meeting-place, the White Lion in Wych Street, where, as a historian records, "the pernicious and general custom of wearing masks enabled half repentant sinners to mix with the most profligate of the female sex and indulge in excesses which they would not have dared to commit had their features been exposed." The constables appeared suddenly in the midst of the revels and compelled the whole company to unmask, when they discovered "females of some distinction, tradesmen's wives and their daughters, and many women of another class, a collection which really surprised each other, the vicious hardly crediting that they were in such good company, and the novitiates frightened at the features of unmasked depravity."

We have been unable to follow the fortunes of this particular assembly before the magistrates, but a similar raid made later at Exeter Change supplies further comment upon Mr. Addison's pleasantry. The High Constable of Westminster descended upon a masquerade at midnight and made a great haul, which he duly displayed before Mr. Fielding. That eminent magistrate sat up all night to hear the charge, "but several of them being found to be persons of distinction, the justice, not thinking proper to expose them, after a severe reprimand dismissed them all."

"The women either come by themselves," says Addison, describing the amenities of the masquerade

of 1711, "or are introduced by friends, who are obliged to quit them upon their first entrance to the conversation of anybody that addresses himself to them." This by the way was one of the rules of the true masquerade, which was its chief attraction for the frisky maid or matron of those days. Introductions were unknown, and absolute incognito was possible for all who wished to preserve it. The mask and domino were inviolable, except indeed to the police, and any infringement of that rule by a masker led to the inevitable chastisement of the offender by the other men in the room, of which there are numerous fatal results recorded. "But," continues Mr. Addison, "there are several rooms where the parties may retire and show their faces by consent. Whispers, squeezes, nods and embraces, are the innocent freedoms of the place, and the whole design of this libidinous assembly seems to terminate in assignations and intrigues." Go with Addison, too, as the Young Templar to the Tuesday's masquerade, see him claimed as a brother by a half-dozen female quakers, taken out to dance the minuet by a "woman of the very first quality," who negligently displays a watch with a coronet upon it, listen to his subsequent lamentations at having "mistaken a cloud for Juno," and you will be under no delusions as to certain aspects of the masquerade of Queen Anne. Listen also to Dick Steele in his humorous character of "Undertaker of the Masquerade." The incongruity of the talk and the dresses amused Dick. "The misfortune of the thing is that

people dress themselves in what they have a mind to be and not what they are fit for. There is not a girl in the town but let her have her will in going to a mask and she shall dress as a shepherdess. . . . The last day we presented everybody was so rashly habited that, when they came to speak to each other, a nymph with a crook had not a word to say but in the pert style of the pit, we had a judge who danced a minuet with a quaker for his partner, while a half-dozen harlequins stood by as spectators, a Turk drank me off two bottles of wine, and a Jew eat me up half a ham of bacon."

The humourists of the *Spectator* thus first drew attention to a subject which for the next half century occupied half the censors in the periodical press and produced an agitation against this particular form of entertainment which was more violent in expression and barren in result than any on record. The masquerade absolutely throve on opposition. As time went on it was presented by grand juries, denounced by pamphleteers, suppressed by a royal proclamation, but it survived them all. The Bishop of London took its enormities as the text of a sermon in 1726, rivers of ink flowed down the pages of Craftsmen, Prompters, London and Gentleman's Magazines. It was the subject of facetious and satirical efforts in prose and verse in would-be smart journals which are infinitely more depressing to read than the serious lucubrations of the dignified clergy. They wrote dreadful plays upon it, where heiresses with fortunes

were disposed of and married to needy adventurers by convenient parsons waiting round the corner; Edwin from the country taking Angelina to taste its delights has his bride abducted, takes to drink, and describes his ruin in very maudlin prose over whole pages of a monthly review. Mr. Henry Fielding wrote satires upon it of a very different calibre; and Mr. Hogarth, inspired no doubt by a love of morality, but drawing some inspiration also from the theatrical interest which the popularity of the masquerade was ruining, made it the subject of some of his most ferocious plates. There were strange financial proposals too from amateur chancellors of the exchequer, who proposed to levy taxes upon all tickets for these ungodly diversions and to devote the proceeds to the Foundling Hospital, an institution which they declared was populated by the amours which were kindled by the opportunities of the masquerade. Grave statisticians drew attention to what they contended was an appalling fact, that the vogue of the masquerade quadrupled the normal number of divorces, and pious God-fearing people, whose nerves were sorely shaken by the two smart shocks of earthquake which startled London towards the middle of the century, pointed to the judgment of heaven which these unholy revels were calling upon the town.

It was precisely during the period of this continued opposition, which stretched practically from the days of Queen Anne to those of George the Third, that the masquerade established itself as one of the chief

amusements of the upper classes of society in London. Middle class England might still cherish its memories of the Puritans, but there were other views in high quarters, and a mere newspaper agitation was of little effect in a day when four-fifths of the population could not read. The diversions of an aristocracy, too, were moderately safe from interference by legislation provided by a Parliament whose two houses were composed of the aristocracy and its nominees. The well-born and well-placed classes of Anne and the Georges, in short, with King George the Second at their head, enjoyed the *fredaines* of the masquerade, and determined to keep them in spite of the bishops and the moralists of the press. And they succeeded perfectly.

Fashionable London was very much aided in that natural desire by the appearance in England of one of those geniuses who is usually forthcoming to give practical shape to the wants of any body of people with an itching for amusement, for which they are able and willing to pay. Beau Nash at Bath, Robert Arthur at White's Club, William Brooks at Brooks's, Almack at his Assembly Rooms in King Street, Crockford at the big gaming club in St. James's Street, were all men who came forward to give practical shape to some desire of a body of well-to-do patrons. The man who came to the rescue of the masquerade in the early quarter of the last century was the Swiss adventurer, John James Heidegger.

Heidegger, though an adventurer, was an adventurer of a very favourable type, and was possessed of many amiable qualities. He had left his paternal home, the pastor's house at Zurich, in consequence of some youthful intrigue, and had wandered about Europe for a quarter of a century living by his wits and acquiring knowledge of men and cities. Some quasi diplomatic mission from his native country brought him to England in 1708, at the age of nearly fifty. Nothing came of the mission, however, and he remained in London, thinking, no doubt, that England was as good a place to pick up a living as another. Heidegger enlisted in the Guards, a regiment in which you might at that time find very well-born men among the rank and file. He is described as a man of great social qualities, and as possessing the ugliest face ever seen on living shoulders. We can quite believe both stories, for the place the Swiss Count, as he was called, took in a ridiculously exclusive society is a proof of the one, and the surviving portraits of him by Vanloo and others leave no doubt about the other. There are a score of facetious allusions to his lack of beauty in verse, prose, and the graphic arts, and the undoubted fact is embalmed in a score of amusing anecdotes. Lord Chesterfield told his importunate tailor, Mr. Jolly, who was dunning his lordship for his bill, that he would not pay him until he could produce an uglier man than himself. He induced Heidegger to wait with him at his lordship's levee the next morning, and got his money. Heidegger's social success may

be measured by the fact that White's Club at the Chocolate House thought him worthy of membership, an honour that exclusive society was very apt to deny to acknowledged rank and conspicuous merit. Heidegger was the very man to organise the management of an amusement of which fashionable London was eager to partake, to rescue it from the attacks of its enemies, of the clergy, and of the press, and to lift it out of its rather dubious surroundings at Spring Gardens and elsewhere.

Heidegger's eventual assumption of the office of *Surintendant des plaisirs d'Angleterre*, a title given him by young Mr. Henry Fielding, unless that gentleman's line is only an echo of some popular epithet, was more or less accidental. A year after he came to England he was clever enough to collect a subscription which enabled him to produce an opera at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket. The opera was a non-descript affair, apparently, called "Thomyris," written in English, and furnished out with airs from other operas of the Italian composers, Bonocini, Scarlatti, and the rest. But it brought the Swiss Count much gold, and it established for him a connection with the theatre. He came to be consulted on operatic and theatrical matters, gave often good advice on the conduct of opera, which was at the time in a very poor way, and as time went on he acquired the very useful reputation of a sound critic in theatrical and operatic matters. He had the good fortune to recommend some decorations or arrangements at the Haymarket with which

100 AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

his Majesty King George the First expressed himself mightily pleased. The great world took him up and caressed him; princes gave him amethyst snuff-boxes set in gold; if my lady wanted a rout arranged at her town house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, or at the country mansion, or if there was a musical entertainment or a dancing assembly to be arranged at a public room, Mr. Heidegger was called in and did the thing to perfection. It was a sure sign of notoriety at least, if no great honour, to gain even distant allusion in Mr. Pope's pleasant writings. Mr. Heidegger's personal appearance is thus lightly touched upon in that poet's description in the "Dunciad" of the bird which accompanied the Goddess of Dulness—

"A monster of a fowl,
Something betwixt an Heidegger and owl."

Heidegger came to be spoken of as *arbiter elegantiarum*. King George, who loved both masquerade and opera, gave him much countenance; he was made Master of the Revels, and became manager of his Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket, where he co-operated with Mr. Handel in the production of opera. "He then set about improving another species of diversion," says one of his biographers, "not less agreeable to the king, which was the masquerades."

Knowing what we do of the king's fondness for those entertainments, it is very comic to read some of the appeals of the opposition in the old magazines to

the morality of his Majesty in the matter of the masquerade. Said some austere moralist, writing to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1747, "The king has showed a noble contempt of Italian Operas by discouraging them as much as he can, and I doubt not but that masquerades will meet with the same disapprobation with him." We know that George discouraged opera by protecting Heidegger and by accepting him as manager of the Haymarket; it is stated also that his Majesty was so pleased with one of his masquerades that he presented Heidegger with £1000. The fact is that although masquerades were bad enough from some points of view, they were not opposed upon their demerits alone. There was much interested malevolence in these attacks in the newspapers, generally inspired by the theatrical interests, which were suffering from the competition of the new amusement. The charge that masquerade was as bad as opera was no very grave reflection on the masquerade, but from the actor's point of view one was as pernicious as the other, and he lifted up his voice against both, with the periodical press as a mouth-piece.

Mr. Nichols, who wrote that valuable work on the art of Mr. Hogarth, tells a funny story which throws much light on Heidegger's relations with his patrons, and is not without its value as a picture of a fashionable masquerade. It also gives us some interesting glimpses of the personality of the man himself, of his good-nature and his appalling ugliness. The wild

Duke of Montagu, it seems, invited several hard-drinking friends to the Devil Tavern in Fleet Street, and included Mr. Heidegger in the company. The rest were in the plot, and were either hardened enough to drink fairly with Heidegger and prevail, or they shirked their liquor as he took his. In either event he was soon dead drunk and under the table, whence he was duly carried into a bedroom and laid on the bed in a profound sleep. The duke then sent for a waxwork maker, the daughter of Mrs. Salmon who lived nearly opposite the Devil Tavern in Fleet Street. This artist was instructed to make a plaster mould of the sleeping Master of the Revels, and from the mould thus obtained was made a facsimile in wax of the unconscious Heidegger's face, which was duly coloured after nature.

This frolic took place a few days before a masquerade at the Haymarket at which the king had announced his intention of being present. The duke then bribed Heidegger's valet to tell him what clothes his master was to wear on the occasion; provided a similar dress, and made up a man of Heidegger's stature with the clothes and the mask into a perfect double of that gentleman. The king, the Duke of Cumberland, and the Countess of Yarmouth and some others of the court were all in the plot. The arrival of the king, who was in mask, was only known to the general company by the band in the gallery playing "God Save the King" as his Majesty seated himself. The order to strike up the national anthem was given by Hei-

degger when informed of the royal arrival by the officers of the court. Heidegger went to the musicians as usual, who began the tune. As soon as his back was turned, however, the false Heidegger advanced, countermanded the order, and substituted for the loyal anthem the Jacobite and treasonable song "Over the Water to Charlie." The room was at once in an uproar, and Heidegger himself both frightened and furious. He rushed back to the gallery, stamped and swore, accused the musicians of being drunk and conspiring to ruin him. He then retired to one of the smaller rooms, when the sham Heidegger, imitating Heidegger's own voice, again stepped into the middle of the room in front of the gallery, damned the musicians for blockheads at the top of his voice, and requested to know why they were not playing "Over the Water to Charlie" as he had told them. The tune was again changed to "Charlie," which brought back Heidegger to the room. The company was again in an uproar. The Guards, who were not in the secret, were for going up into the gallery and pitching the musicians down into the floor, and were only restrained by the Duke of Cumberland. Shouts of "Shame, shame," arose from all parts of the room. Here the Duke of Montagu interposed and whispered into the ear of the Master of the Revels that the king was violently angry, and that he had best make his peace with his Majesty at once and then discharge the musicians, who were certainly mad. Heidegger was conducted to the presence for that

purpose, and made his apology. He was turning away when he heard his own voice at his elbow exclaim, "Indeed, Sire, it was not my fault, but that devil's in my likeness." "Poor Heidegger," says Mr. Nichols, "turned round, stared, staggered, grew pale, but could not utter a word." The duke thinking, and with reason, that the joke had already gone far enough, here whispered the details of the plot in the ear of the poor Master of the Revels. He accepted the joke as well as he could, but declared that he would never conduct another masquerade until he had seen the mould made by "that witch the waxwork woman" broken up in his presence.

It is quite intelligible that with support and patronage in high quarters Heidegger could snap his fingers, as indeed he did, at bishops and pamphleteers. It is almost certain too that under Heidegger's management the character of the masquerade itself improved upon the irregularities which Steele and Addison noticed so humorously. It must be confessed also that Heidegger's opponents, liberal as they are in general abuse, are very sparing of specific charges. One of their few accusations which was supported by details of evidence, was that of the infringements of the gaming acts which went on at the masquerade. It was inevitable that in a mixed company, where no one was refused who could produce a fancy dress of some sort and the necessary twenty-seven shillings for the ticket, some irregularity should occur at intervals.

The magistrates occasionally made raids on the masquerade to discover highwaymen who were supposed to be present in the gaming and lottery rooms, but generally with ill success, though on one occasion they made a haul of an ingenious gamester who was passing rouleaux made up of halfpence for the orthodox rouleaux made up of twenty-five guineas. But the general charges of the Craftsmen and Connoisseurs are not convincing. "Infamous assemblies which tend more effectually to corrupt the morals of the people than all the plays and interludes which were ever acted"; "Venetian balls introduced to corrupt the few remaining sparks of virtue yet left among us," are rather clumsily expressed charges which may have been true, but are lacking in precision. It is quite easy to see interested motives in the complaint of a political paper of "a Harlequin preceding Punch and making way with his wooden sword and giving to all he met, even to Royal hands, a printed bill as follows." The printed bill was a lampoon on Sir Robert Walpole about the "Norfolk company of Artificial Comedians" and "Robin's Great Theatrical Booth in Palace Yard," and George the Second laughed as he read it, we may be sure. General accusations, too, "that the vitiated taste for foreign pleasures is only relished by the most shameless among both sexes in the upper gradations of life," and "I observe with pleasure that masquerades are not supported by persons of high rank and large fortunes, but have of late been chiefly composed

of gamesters, players, women of the town, and attorneys' clerks," may be fairly held to cancel each other.

On the other hand, Heidegger's advertisements were highly suspicious. He issued his tickets at the aristocratic White's Chocolate House, it is true, but "persons of quality" were begged to be careful of the tickets applied for in their names, and to return superfluous ones "to prevent them falling into bad hands." It is also stimulating to the imagination to read that "sufficient guards would be stationed within and without to prevent all disorders and indecencies," and that "strict orders are given not to deliver any glasses or bottles from the sideboards, and to shut them up early." A contemporary critic, too, of Mr. Heidegger's efforts for the amusement of the quality has quite the old ring of Dick Steele's lucubrations in the *Spectator*. "I had like to have been knocked down by a shepherdess for having run my elbow a little inadvertently into her side. She swore like a trooper, and threatened me in a very masculine voice. But I was timely taken off by a presbyterian parson, who told me in a very soft tone that he believed I was a very pretty fellow, and that he would meet me in Spring Gardens to-morrow night."

These wits, and others of greater power, did their worst for Heidegger and his masquerades, but he defied them all, and boasted of making £5000 a year by the business. He was certainly a man of resource; the king himself signed a royal proclamation against

the Masquerade; Mr. Heidegger changed the name of the next one to a Ridotto, and had the honour of bowing his Majesty to his seat.

“Thou Heidegger the English taste hast found
And rul’st the mob of quality with sound;
In Lent, if masquerades displease the town
Call ’em ridottos, and they still go down.
Go on, Prince Phiz, to please the British nation
Call thy next masquerade a convocation.”

Later a Middlesex Grand Jury presented Mr. Heidegger by name as “the principal promoter of vice and immorality,” and the Master of the Revels about the same time had the honour of receiving King George at his country house of Barn Elms, a house where entertainments of another sort still flourish under the auspices of the Ranelagh Club. Heidegger and his entertainments thus thrived on opposition and grew fat on obloquy; there is scarcely a single remark preserved in the records of that time which is not a hostile criticism of his undertakings or his morals, or a scoff at his ugliness. Even when he died his epitaph was “the late Ct. H—d—g—r, pandour to the British nation.” But his biographers have a kindly word for the old man, who distributed his wealth with both hands among the poor and needy. There was never a successful entertainment at the Haymarket but that his agents carried help to poverty and suffering wherever they could find it, and he died “immensely lamented, aged near ninety,” in 1749, as the

London Post informs us, leaving to the British public the legacy of the perfected masquerade.

The British public, or that portion of it which counted most, the few thousands of fashionable people who composed London society, accepted the legacy with all thankfulness and lost no time in entering into its enjoyment. In the year following Mr. Heidegger's death, a grand Venetian Ball at the Haymarket excited the ire of a good many eloquent scribes who were unable to be present. "All the shameless ones among both sexes in the upper gradations of life" it seems assisted. It was "ushered in," we are told, "with a pompous preparation to engage the general attention. Our fribbles must puff it, our women of quality echo it at their card tables till it becomes the general talk and fires every profligate imagination with impatience to see this raree show of Venice. Pity it is that the list of names who have honoured the rites of Venice and Bacchus with their devotion in the Venetian worship cannot be had in order to disperse through the nation and mark out to public notice the worshippers there." No one regrets the absence of that list more than the present writer, but we have a shrewd suspicion that Mr. Heidegger's successors had the honour of his Majesty's presence on this occasion. Frederick Prince of Wales was not there, which was an excellent reason for the appearance of his august father. "What a sensible pleasure must it give all honest Britons that he whose virtues have rendered him so amiable in their eyes by every good

office of humanity and goodness within the little extent of the power he is entrusted with, to miss the darling name in the guilty roll; excellent man, worthy of the public love and the triple c-r-n which he is one day to wear." A scribe who could discover such virtues as these in "Fred" might have been a little tolerant even of the enormities of the masquerade, and all who have read much in the records of the distressing family quarrels between Norfolk House and St. James's will recognise the probability that this panegyric of the prince was a gentle reproof of the presence of the king at the Haymarket. There was a guard of military there too, which gave much scandal to the correspondent of *Sylvanus Urban*, as also to the magistrates, who declared that "the Venetian Ball tended to encourage gaming and the corruption of the morals of both sexes, was unlawful, and a public nuisance." Perhaps it was, but the masquerade continued to flourish like a green bay-tree both at the Haymarket and elsewhere.

There were several new buildings about town which arose about the middle of the century and lent themselves admirably to its purposes. One of the finest of these was the Rotunda at Ranelagh, a fine circular room of 150 feet in diameter, built by Mr. Jones, the architect of the East India Company, in 1742, and the lovers of masquerade were not slow to recognise the possibilities of that fine room for their favourite diversion. It is at Ranelagh, as we believe, that we get the first view of the masquerade in its develop-

ment, and can form a clear idea of its attractions. So far we have been almost entirely dependent upon hostile criticism of a very destructive character for our details of the masquerade. At Ranelagh we have the invaluable assistance of such writers as Horace Walpole, and it is not without significance as to the interested nature of much of the criticism we have quoted, to find that the entertainments at Ranelagh escaped the worst of its slings and arrows. At Ranelagh, be it remembered, there was no stage for actors, and the masquerade did not displace those deserving artists, or silence the warbling of the prima donnas or the quavering male sopranos of the opera. These people had a distinct grievance at the King's Theatre, it must be admitted, and it is more than probable that the notes which were hushed by the popularity of the revels in Haymarket became vocal again under the auspices of Sylvanus Urban in the groves of Clerkenwell.

Heidegger was yet alive when they took a leaf out of his book at Ranelagh, and produced in 1749 the "Jubilee Masquerade in the Venetian manner," to celebrate the conclusion of the peace in that year. It was on the 1st of May that all London flocked to the pleasant gardens at Chelsea to see "by far the best understood and prettiest spectacle" that Mr. Horace Walpole ever saw in his life. Horry was quite enthusiastic, went back to Strawberry Hill to recover from the fatigue, and wrote to his "dear child," Horace Mann, at Florence, to tell him all about it. One of

the managers at Ranelagh, it seems, who was a German, got at the Walmoden and induced her to persuade King George "to order it." George was nothing loth, we may be sure, from what we know of his tastes. Let Walpole tell the tale in his own words. "When you entered you found the whole garden filled with masks and spread with tents, which remained all night *very commodely*," says Horace in italics. "In one quarter was a maypole dressed with garlands, and people dancing round it to a tabor and pipe and rustic music, all masked, as were all the various bands of music, which were disposed in different parts of the garden, some like huntsmen with French horns, some like peasants, and a troupe of harlequins and scaramouches in the little open temple on the mount. On the canal was a sort of gondola adorned with flags and streamers, and filled with music rowing about. All round the outside of the amphitheatre were shops filled with Dresden China, Japan, &c., and all the shopkeepers in mask. The amphitheatre was illuminated, and in the middle was a circular bower composed of all kinds of firs in tubs, from twenty to thirty feet high, under the orange trees, with small lamps in each orange, and below them all sorts of the finest auri-culas in pots and festoons of natural flowers hanging from tree to tree. There were booths for tea and wine, gaming-tables, and dancing, and about two thousand persons. In short, it pleased me more than anything I ever saw."

Thus Horace, and if you place him in the fore-

ground of the picture he has preserved for us with most of the notabilities in London society in 1749, you have the Jubilee Masquerade at Ranelagh on May the 1st of that year. Nothing surely was ever more innocent, which was no doubt a reason for the silence of the critics who so belaboured the festivities at the Opera House. The show was so successful that it was determined to repeat it in the form of a subscription masquerade, "and people will go in their rich habits," Mr. Walpole prophesied to his correspondent. He was there again and saw the king "well disguised in an old-fashioned English habit," and the old gentleman was much pleased, as we learn, when one of his subjects unwittingly asked his Majesty to hold her cup as she was drinking tea. The Duke of Cumberland was so fat that no disguise was sufficient to hide his royal identity. The Duchess of Richmond was made up as a Lady Mayoress of the time of James the First, and Lord Delawarr after a picture of Queen Elizabeth's Porter, which we may still see at Hampton Court Palace. Most of the chief figures of that Georgian society were there, Mrs. Pitt the famous beauty in "a red veil, which made her look gloriously handsome," Lady Kildare and the rest. Walpole, with his antiquarian memory, noticed Lady Betty Smithson with "such a pyramid of baubles on her head that she was exactly like the princess of Babylon in Grammont"—poor Lady Muskerry, whom we saw so shockingly hoaxed by Miss Hamilton at Queen Catherine's masquerade. Last of all came a figure which brought

a touch of that *abandon* of the early masquerades so deplored by the bishops and the pamphleteers into the innocent decorum which Horace records so pleasantly. Here was Miss Chudleigh, whose whole life was a masquerade, masquerading as Iphigenia prepared for the sacrifice, dressed up in flesh-coloured silk tights, "and so naked," says Walpole, "that you would have taken her for Andromeda." We really hesitate to state further details of this costume, which may be read in the letters of Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu. As a fact, however, it was really one of the most innocent of the lady's disguises. She was masquerading at this moment as Miss Chudleigh and a maid-of-honour to the Princess of Wales, and all the time she was twenty-nine years of age and the Countess of Bristol and the mother of a son. One wonders if she put on that astonishing costume for the benefit of King George the Second, who pretended to be in love with her, and gave her a watch "which cost thirty-five guineas, out of his own pocket, and not charged on the civil list." Anyway the charming creature masqueraded on to the end of the chapter, when old Tiger Thurlow ordered her to be burnt on the hand for masquerading as the Duchess of Kingston, when she masqueraded over to the continent. A strange figure this at the first masquerade we are able to people with real characters, and the other maids-of-honour were so shocked that they would not speak to her; and much she cared, no doubt.

It is quite obvious that by this time, either for good

or for evil, the masquerade was established among the regular diversions of the metropolis. There was no longer any necessity for hole-and-corner meetings; it had asserted its vogue against the opposition of the good people who really believed in its iniquities and of those others who may have been inspired by the same pious motives, but were certainly biassed by others of a more worldly character. If the masquerade had left untouched other interests at the Haymarket, we should have heard less of its enormities, the columns of the *Gentleman's Magazine* and similar periodicals might even have become trumpets for its praises, as they did when the quality began to flock to Ranelagh. "We might have challenged all Europe," wrote a correspondent of that excellent journal in 1755, in language strangely different from the fulminations of a few years earlier, "to shew us the diversion of a masquerade in the perfection with which it was there exhibited, either for the spaciousness of the room, the beauty of the ladies, the splendour of their jewels, or the elegance of their habits."

During the next ten years the taste for the masquerade spread all over the country, and its pleasures were even toned down to suit the decorum of the private houses of the great. Thus a "grand masquerade ball with music" was given in 1763 by his Grace the Duke of Richmond, "the vocal parts of which were performed by the nobility in masquerade." We again quote the actual words of the strangely tolerant *Gentleman's Magazine*, which assures us that the Dukes

of York and Cumberland were present, together with over eight hundred of the quality, and that the "entertainment was in every respect grand beyond description." Side by side with the account of his grace's we may place the story of another of a different character, which supports our proposition of the general acceptance of the masquerade. "Nearly fifty persons, ladies and gentlemen of the hair-dressing class, were assembled at a house in the Borough for the purpose of entertaining themselves in the taste with a masked ball, but unfortunately for them the floor gave way, and some had their legs broken, and some were killed on the spot." Then there was a great function of the sort given by "the club at Arthurs'," which we still know as White's in St. James's Street, to fifteen hundred people, where "the illuminations were in the same style with those given by the King of Denmark, but much improved," as we are assured. The fashion even spread to the chaste solitudes of North Britain. "At Duff House, the jointure apartments of the Countess Dowager of Fife, was exhibited the first masquerade ever seen in Scotland. In order that proper decorum might be preserved, several ladies of distinction were there unmasked. Among them were the Countess Dowager of Moray, Lady Elphinstone, and Mrs. Mure, the lady of Baron Mure." Is it not admirable, this acceptance of the forbidden thing with the precaution of the unmasked dowagers? The masquerade indeed survived the chastening influence of the new young

King George the Third, and grew and flourished exceedingly in the early years of his reign. You will find it pervading most of the popular engravings of the period to which students owe so much. The artists of the Bowles prints were busy with the masquerade, and drew much inspiration from its incidents, shepherdesses coming home fast asleep in Sedan chairs, fast asleep, or drunk if you like to think evil, and the like. The caricaturists and cartoon draughtsmen, too, used the masquerade to convey all kinds of droll ideas. There were masquerades of politicians, of nations, of kings and potentates, what you will. Mr. Hogarth even drew masquerades of the Court, and hinted in his blunt manner at certain whispers which had great interest for the scandalmongers of the day. He placed my Lord Bute by the side of the Princess of Wales, and matched the young Prince George with the elusive little quakeress Hannah Lightfoot.

One of the most famous of the masquerades of the great period was that which inaugurated the opening of the Pantheon in Oxford Street in 1772. The occasion was marked by an incident which provided the sensation which was seldom wanting at a masquerade. It had been rumoured that the managers of the Pantheon had set their faces against the admission of certain ladies whose position in society was very well understood, ladies whose features still smile at us from some of the most attractive canvases of Sir Joshua Reynolds. "Women of slight character," it was said, were to be excluded, and "all the players."

White's and Almack's at once began to ferment at the thought, for Mrs. Baddeley, who had several friends in both of those notable institutions, was held to be strongly pointed at in the regulation. Lord Melbourne, who was a pillar of both clubs, was at the time writing those touching love-letters to Sophia which may still be read in her life by Mrs. Steel; those letters in which his lordship protests that he loves her "every minnit of his life, Satterday, Sunday and every day." There were Mr. William Hanger, Sir Charles Bunbury, Lord March and Mr. Conway, and a score of others, who resented the imputation upon the tuneful lady of Ranelagh and Vauxhall. So they assembled at Almack's, the old club-house in Pall Mall which is now the Marlborough Club, to the number of twenty, and started off in a body to escort Sophia in her chair to the entertainment. It must have been a pretty sight, these fine gentlemen all dressed for the evening grouped round the chair of the fair Baddeley, and tramping through the streets, up St. James's Street, where they were joined by the contingent from White's, making their number up to fifty, across Piccadilly, up Bond Street and down the Oxford Road and so to the Pantheon. It was a long walk for their buckled shoes and silk stockings, and one hopes that the weather was fine.

At the door was a guard of porters in livery armed with long staves, who were on the lookout for the Baddeley and her sisters in art. They put their staves across the door and said with much civility, that their

orders were to refuse admittance to all the players. The fine gentlemen whipped out their swords; the porters, frightened out of their lives, made way for Sophia, and that lady marched triumphantly into the fine room under a long canopy made by the crossed swords of her gallant escort. The gentlemen, still unappeased, refused to sheath their steel or allow the music to proceed until the managers came forward to apologise to the injured lady, and her friend Mrs. Steel asserts, though it is scarce credible, that two duchesses, those of Ancaster and Argyll, came forward to express to Mrs. Baddeley the pleasure it gave their graces to welcome such an ornament to the assembly. Anyway there was a messenger ready to run off to the Abington to tell her of the result of the Baddeley's adventure, and there was no more opposition to the "players" at the Pantheon.

You may read in the *Town and Country Magazine* of the company which continued to flock to the Pantheon in spite of the Baddeley and the rest, the Duchess of Richmond and Mrs. Damer, Lady Melbourne herself, Mrs. Bouverie and Mrs. Crewe, all ladies of high *ton*, and besides all the bloods of White's, such men as Sir Joshua Reynolds and Goldsmith and Dr. Johnson. It was at the Pantheon that the Doctor contradicting Mr. Boswell's thrifty animadversions on the charge of half a guinea for the entrance, declared that there was half a guinea's worth of superiority over other people who had not seen it. To have seen Sophia's

entrance under the swords was surely cheap at that figure.

Popular as the masquerade had become with the classes for whom it was specially purveyed, we imagine that its final glory waited for the appearance in London of a second professional organiser, a lady named Teresa Cornelys, upon whom the mantle of Mr. Heidegger may be said finally to have descended. Teresa Cornelys, if that were her true name, was a German singer who had tramped the continent during her youth and sung in half the cities of France and Italy, as the Pompeati. She seems to have arrived in England in 1757—to have met with indifferent success as a singer, and to have turned to the prevailing taste of the public assembly as a means of making a living. No one knows anything of her resources; her subsequent career would suggest that she was in monetary difficulties from the first. In any case the first information we have of Madame Cornelys in England is the announcement of her taking Carlisle House, an old mansion of the Howards, which stood on the site of the present Italian Church at the corner of Sutton Street in Soho Square. She decorated and enlarged the place, and solicited the suffrages of the aristocracy for public entertainments, concerts, balls and the like.

It is difficult to understand how an adventuress, as Teresa undoubtedly was, should have succeeded in gaining the support of her great patrons, as she undoubtedly did. But her subscription-lists filled up,

and very early in the first year of her career we see her making acknowledgment of the fact by a thank-offering of an entertainment to the "upper servants of the quality." "On Saturday last (February 18, 1763), Mrs. Cornelys gave a ball at Carlisle House to the upper servants of persons of fashion, as a token of the sense she has of her obligations to the nobility and gentry for their generous subscription to her assembly. The company consisted of 220 persons, who made up fourscore couple in country dances, and as scarce anybody was idle on this occasion the rest sat down to cards." It was a not unskilful move on the part of Teresa, and she had her reward later in seeing Soho crowded with the chairs and coaches of her patrons. If we are to believe her, never was such a difficulty as in getting to those delightful rooms in Soho. She had endless suggestions for the guidance of coachmen and chairmen; she hoped her patrons might be brought "as prudently" to her doors as possible; "that the hackney coachmen will make no disturbance;" that they would forbear from quarrelling, and not run their poles through each other's windows. She had even proposals for the substitution of shutters for windows in the ladies' chairs as a cure for breakages. We take Teresa to have been wise in her generation, and not unskilled in the uses of advertisement.

This energetic lady tried every attraction to enlist the support of her patrons—balls, concerts, assemblies, operas, which she disguised as "harmonic meetings,"

morning concerts of instrumental music. The papers following the year 1763 are full of her advertisements; of her concerts under Bach and Abel; her "society nights" on Mondays; her elaborate distinctions in the colour of her tickets, "blue wrote upon the back, purple wrote upon the back"; of her prayers to her patrons to see to it that none of these precious tickets fell into bad hands; of her deprecation of the wicked rumours that she was jealous of Mr. Almack, who was opening an opposition concern down at those fine rooms in King Street. Her gratitude flowed out to her patrons in those finely-worded announcements in the *Public Advertiser*, where she "humbly hopes that she has not been wanting in duty and gratitude to her protectors, and she cannot sufficiently be thankful for the comfort she enjoys in this happy country which she hopes never to leave." Her wish was fulfilled to the letter, for she died in the Fleet Prison; for the moment, however, she had a very considerable success. Fashionably placed people protected her and flocked to her assemblies, and we read of notabilities from abroad, like the King of Denmark and the Prince of Monaco, making a tour of her rooms as one of the sights of the town, and expressing themselves highly pleased with their elegance. It was not, however, until 1770 that she bethought herself of the masquerade.

If we felt the want of a definite description of the details of the masquerade under Heidegger, there is certainly no lack of rich detail of the same entertainment under Mrs. Cornelys. The memoirs and the

magazines of the day are full of the doings at Carlisle House. Artists like the graceful John Raphael Smith engraved groups of its frequenters, industrious students of the time have even raked up and put on record the items of its dressmakers' bills. All London flocked to see the "Circe of Carlisle House," with royalty at its head; a very unattractive Circe she was, to be sure, unless the mezzotint portrait published by Mr. Carrington Bowles strangely belies her. The bloods from Almack's, White's, and Boodles' gave private masquerades of their own at Teresa's rooms and under her management, and she had practically the patronage of all who counted for anything in the society of 1770 and the few years following.

It was on the 26th of February of that year that the crowd of great people in chairs and coaches to Mrs. Cornelys' masquerade really did produce the crush which Teresa had prophesied in her advertisements. "The principal nobility and gentry of this kingdom, to the number of near 800," as we learn from the reporter, "were present at the masked ball in Soho Square, and the Square and adjacent streets were lined with thousands of people whose curiosity led them to get a sight of the persons going to the masquerade." It is shocking to learn that the crowd behaved very familiarly to all this fine company; they stopped the coaches and chairs, made the occupants lower the windows, and held up lights "in order to display the figures to better advantage. The house was illuminated in the most splendid and picturesque manner

imaginable with between three and four thousand waxlights."

We can fill the rooms, if we like, on that occasion with figures which are familiar to the students of the period. George the Third did not affect the masquerade like his grandfather, but his royal house was represented by the Duke of Cumberland as Henry the Eighth. The *Gentleman's Magazine* was enthusiastic about the characters of this famous assembly. "The Duke of Buccleuch as the figure of Nobody, who, after entertaining himself and his friends sometime in that character, withdrew and appeared in a most elegant dress as an Hungarian Hussar. Sir Richard Phillips was a double man, half miller, half chimney-sweeper, his dress was so admirably contrived that it required some observation which was his real front, and that not only when standing but also when walking, Sir Richard walking sometimes with one foot forward and sometimes the other." Captain Coxe went as a gamester "with cards sewn all over his clothes, and a pack of cards in his hands which he was continually shuffling and offering to the company." Horry Walpole's niece, the widow Waldegrave, who afterwards married the Duke of Gloucester, went as Elizabeth Woodville, "almost sinking under the weight of pearls and beads." There was Miss Monckton, who was remembered in quite modern times as the eccentric Countess of Cork, as "an Indian Sultana, lovely in spite of her colour, with £100,000 in diamonds on her head-dress." Mr.

Garrick was there as Bellarius, and Mr. Foote as a Turk; "the Duchess of Bolton as Diana, Diana herself," says the enthusiastic reporter, and "a Running Footman, the prettiest imagined dress in the ball, and showed that the universal opinion of the wearer's superior taste of dress of any kind has its foundation in truth, the Earl of Carlisle." The Duchess of Buccleuch was the Witch of Endor, and Mrs. Crewe and Lady Almeria Carpenter in the character of Ballad Singers so entertained the whole company that they were encored several times, when those ladies obligingly sang again.

In another number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* of a month later, "Miss Vizard" writes of this diversion to Lady Bab Evergreen at Bath—

"When we entered this paradise, judge, my dear madam,
With what pleasure we met our first ancestor, Adam,
Good God! 'twas so awful to see whence we sprung,
For the dress to his body most prettily clung."

There was never a masquerade without its sensation, and Captain Watson of the Guards provided this one. His effort was received with much disapproval. "A figure of Adam, the unavoidable indelicacy of the dress, flesh-coloured silk with an apron of fig leaves worked in it, fitting the body to the utmost nicety, rendered it the contempt of the whole company. The masque was universally shunned, and the party bore it with the greatest composure," says one report. From another we learn that "Captain Watson per-

sonated the part with great propriety and drollery." At another of Mrs. Cornelys' entertainments, Luttrell, the man whom the Court put up to oppose Wilkes in the Middlesex election, came in a shroud and carried his coffin about with him. At another still a gentleman appeared in a thatched house, and could only be seen through the window. The cottage bore the insurance company's badge on its front, which suggested to a humourist who was present an attempt to fire the thatch.

Teresa Cornelys had the support of all such fine company as this for a succession of masquerades week after week and season after season; there were special paragraphs in the news-sheets devoted to "Masquerade Intelligence," and it was a recognised function of the great ladies of society to give receptions on the night of her entertainments, where the maskers put in an appearance on their way to Soho. And yet Teresa came to utter grief and failed miserably. How was it? Walpole clears up the mystery perfectly. "Mr. Hobart, my Lord Buckinghamshire's brother," was manager of the Opera in the Haymarket, and in 1770 he affronted Signor Guadagni, the Italian tenor of his company, by promoting above Guadagni's sister, who was the prima donna, the Zamperini, whom readers of the *Selwyn* letter will remember as a particular friend of Lord March. Two great ladies, the Duchess of Northumberland and Lady Harrington, took the part of the Guadagni, and induced Mrs. Cornelys to establish an opera for him at Carlisle House, the

“harmonic meetings” which we have already mentioned. As Walpole says, “Mr. Hobart began to starve, and the managers of the theatres were alarmed.” Mr. Hobart informs against Cornelys, hauls her up before the magistrates, and she is indicted, not for her harmonic meetings, but “that she does keep and maintain a common disorderly house, and did permit and suffer divers loose, idle, and disorderly persons to be and remain during the whole night rioting and otherwise misbehaving themselves.”

Such was the official description of Teresa’s grand masquerades, and the disorderly persons included such offenders as the Duke of Gloucester, Mr. Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, the Duke of Buccleuch, and Lord Carlisle, we suppose. Her opera and her Guadagni were the real offence, of course, and her masquerade only the occasion. Wonder of all, Sylvanus Urban began to shake his head again at Carlisle House, and we protest that, all of a sudden, they found another bishop to deplore the evils of the masquerade in that very year, when, as Walpole tells us, Mr. Hobart put the constables in motion and threatened Teresa with Bridewell. Worst of all, Teresa’s creditors began to move, and not long afterwards the *Westminster Magazine* contained a very facetious account of the sale of poor Teresa’s effects in the very rooms of her triumphs, with dreadful jokes about “Cupid turned auctioneer,” and speculative criticisms upon the history of each of her chairs and sofas.

Justice may have been done on this occasion. It

was no doubt wrong of Teresa to smuggle an illegal opera into her rooms to compete with the patentee, but does not her experience, compared with that of Heidegger, throw much light on the continued opposition to the masquerade? Mark the difference in the lots of the two great purveyors of that diversion. Heidegger made a great fortune and entertained the king at his private house; Teresa Cornelys lost every penny she ever possessed or could borrow, and her final years were spent as the king's guest in the Fleet Prison. There were those points of difference between the two, the experience they both shared was the support of a pleasure-loving aristocracy and the opposition and persecution of the theatrical and operatic interest. That opposition which Heidegger successfully overcame, and was never aroused by the masquerades of Ranelagh or the Pantheon, overwhelmed poor Cornelys the moment she began to compete with the opera at the Haymarket. We now know something of Teresa Cornelys' antecedents, not that any one cared about them until she interfered with "Mr. Hobart, my Lord Buckinghamshire's brother," at the opera. Those who care to do so can read much about her early history in the memoirs of that diverting rascal, M. Jacques Casanova de Seingalt. If he is to be believed, which indeed is a large assumption, Teresa, in her youth at least, to use the approved phrase, "was no better than she should be." But which of us is? Certainly not the greater number of her patrons, or the persecutors who ran her down at last.

The poor creature, with age overtaking her, made some later attempts to revive the glories of Carlisle House, but all in vain. Later still she was to be seen at an old mansion which stood at the end of a fine avenue of trees a little west of what is now Wilton Place. Here, under the name of Mrs. Smith, she tried to entice people of fashion to a suite of rooms where she proposed to supply breakfasts and draughts of asses' milk. She failed in this scheme also, and the poor old creature found a refuge in the Fleet, where in 1797 her troubles came to an end at last. The masquerade which Heidegger fanned into a flame blazed up and burned out with Teresa Cornelys, and its vogue has never revived. Peace to her memory.

A KICK-UP AT A HAZARD-TABLE

DRAWN BY THOMAS ROWLANDSON



CHAPTER IV

THE PLAY TABLES

IT was in quite modern times, in the year 1845 in fact, that a paternal government, after much pains-taking inquiry, decided to interfere in the development of what was originally an amusement of the leisured classes of the town, and decreed that facilities for high play in this country should be extinguished. That same diversion of the play table had by that year assumed proportions which made of it a portent. When her present Majesty came to the throne high play was no longer the distraction of a few hundred men of fashion at half-a-dozen clubs, but a great social vice which was eating into the heart of all classes of Englishmen. The passion of mankind for risking its effects upon the accident of chance—the length of a set of straws, the fall of a pair of cubes, the combinations of a number of pieces of pasteboard—is, as we know, as old as history itself. But it was reserved for the England of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to display that passion in its most elaborate and refined form, and the most superficial student of social matters in England during that period would point

without hesitation to gambling as the one diversion of all others which was characteristic of London from the reign of Queen Anne to that of Queen Victoria. It happens, also, that little is recorded of organised gaming before the first of those reigns, and, consequently, that the social records of the hundred and fifty years which preceded the Gaming Act of 1845 include most of what is known of the pastime, or the fashion, or the vice, call it what you will, in this country.

Such a period would include the organised gaming at court during the festivities of Christmas; it would pass to the development of hazard at White's and the coffee-houses; it would include the notable doings of Mr. Charles Fox and his friends at Almack's and Brooks's; the fashionable craze for faro which prevailed in society at the end of the last century; the palmy days of the hells of the West-end at the beginning of this; the scandal at Graham's in St. James's Street, which was the beginning of the end; and the crown and glory of high play at Crockford's between 1827 and the accession of her present Majesty.

There is, we believe, a very sufficient explanation of the growth of high play in England during the period we have indicated. The passion for play amongst modern peoples has invariably begun at the top of the social scale and spread downwards. The gilded youth of this country have always been the most eminent exponents of games of chance, and the fact that these gentlemen were pretty well employed during the troubled days of the Stuarts had as a natural conse-

quence the other fact that the establishment of play as the chief amusement of the town waited on their leisure. This only came with the more settled days of Anne and the first Georges, when the bloods about town had first an opportunity to devote themselves to the study of hazard. In dealing, therefore, with gaming as the chief amusement of Londoners, we think we may ignore any reference to the isolated *coups* of the gamesters which are recorded at intervals since very early times, and, after a glance at the gaming at court, pass on to the rage for hazard at the coffee-houses, which was in full blast when George the First came over, spread gradually all over London wherever people with ready money met together, and established the rage for play which was only suppressed by the Gaming Acts of 1845 still in force.

The public gaming at court seems to have been a curious survival of early enactments which limited gaming of all sorts to the period of national rejoicing which came round with each Christmas. Under the Tudors and Stuarts it became the custom for the court to join in the Christmas festivities, by throwing open a room provided with a play table at which any of the lieges might risk his money against that of the court from the king downwards, and successive monarchs from Henry the Seventh to George the Second thus gave their royal countenance to gaming. The arrangements were under an officer of the Lord Steward's department called the Groom Porter, and were nominally limited to the period between Christ-

mas and the Epiphany. It is difficult to determine how far the public were admitted to the presence of the king himself. There was certainly a public room where the meanest of his Majesty's subjects might make his cast or set the stake of an opponent, of which we have a vivid account from Mr. Pepys.

"To see how persons of the best quality do here sit down and play with people of any, though meaner, and to see how people in ordinary clothes shall come hither and play away 100 or 2, or 300 guinnys without any kind of difficulty, and lastly to see the formality of the groome porter who is judge of all their disputes in play and all quarrels that may arise therein . . . is a consideration I never could have thought had been in the world, had I not seen it."

It is probable, however, that the king's appearance in public was only nominal, and that the royal operations were confined to a private room, and to play with his chosen courtiers. Thus Mr. Evelyn records that King Charles opened the revels on the evening of January 6, 1662, by throwing the dice himself as a first cast in the Privy Chamber. Mr. Ashton in his "History of Gambling" thus describes the etiquette of the court gaming. "When the king felt disposed, and it was his pleasure to play, it was the etiquette and custom to announce to the company that 'his Majesty was out,' on which information all court ceremony and restraint were set aside, and when the royal gamester had either lost or won to his heart's content, notice of the royal pleasure to discontinue

the game was with like formality announced by intimation that 'his Majesty was at home,' whereupon play forthwith ceased, and the etiquette and ceremony of the palace were resumed."

There are incidents of this royal diversion which are not without interest. The animadversions of Mr. Pepys and Mr. Evelyn, on the occasions when they visited Whitehall, describe with some eloquence one of the aspects of the court of the Restoration. There is a story of Lord Chesterfield, too, which we shall glance at when we come to the time of George the Second, which has its humour, and the fact that George the Third abolished the custom and dismissed the groom porter with a gratuity, were quite in keeping with the traditions of the austere morality of that virtuous monarch. But our chief interest in gaming at court is to take note of the encouragement that such an example in high places could not fail to give to the particular vanity of Londoners we are examining. And in this connection it is worthy of mention that the numerous Acts of Parliament which were passed to discourage gaming during the early years of the last century thoughtfully excluded the precincts of the royal palaces from their operation. Court gaming, however, affected the morals and the worldly possession of but a few, and we pass to the consideration of the first reign of hazard in London, of which so much cannot be said.

It was at the coffee-houses, headed by White's Chocolate House and the Cocoa Tree, that hazard

was to be seen at its glory. Very early in the century, as we see elsewhere, the more fashionable of the frequenters of White's had formed themselves into a club which met in private rooms of their own. The company at White's included all the leading men of the day, and it was to avoid meeting the rabble which flocked to the play tables downstairs that these gentlemen formed a private society with its own private accommodation. Dissipated and broken captains, sharpers, and even highwaymen of the more presentable type were constantly to be met at the Chocolate House; judges there were liable to meet the man whom they might afterwards have to sentence in the dock; it was no uncommon thing in those days to recognise a body swinging in chains on a heath outside London as a man with whom you had called a main at hazard a few weeks before at White's or at the Cocoa Tree. So the Ministers and great lawyers and men of fashion of Queen Anne's reign very naturally retired to their own rooms at the Chocolate House, where they could lose fortunes to each other in all privacy and decorum.

Hazard was a game of pure chance, in which skill or knowledge were at an utter discount, and the merest novice might contend with the case-hardened gambler on terms of perfect equality. The game, as we believe, has quite disappeared in England, and it may be of interest to recall its simple features. Hazard, of course, was a game played with dice, and could be shared by as many players as could find room at the

circular table where it was always practised. All the players took the box in turn, and played against any or all of the rest of the company when he made his cast. The caster took the box, named a sum as his stake, and placed it on the table. The company, or such as wished to join in the game, then matched the caster's stake with a sum of equal amount. The caster then called his "main," by naming any number from five to nine, rattled the dice in the box, and threw them on the table. If the number of his main appeared he won his stake and gathered up the money on the table, when the box passed on to his left-hand neighbour. There was another number to each main called a "nick," and if that number appeared the caster also won. If, however, neither main nor nick resulted from the throw, the original main the caster had called became what was known as the "chance" of the company, and the number he had thrown that of the caster himself. He was then allowed three further casts, and if neither of the chances appeared in the combinations of the dice to decide the ownership of the stakes he was judged to have "thrown out," and the box passed on without gain or loss to either party. When, however, the chances were set up by the failure of the main or nick, the "odds" were called by the groom porter, an official like a marker at a billiard table, who took his name from the old functionary who kept the table at court. The odds were well known, and it was consequently quite easy to determine the respective values of the chances of caster and "setters," as the

company were called. If the caster's chance was the better one, he had the option of increasing his original stake to any amount he chose, the setters being required to match it to the extent of two-thirds only. Such were the outlines of hazard, a game which had obvious fascinations for a true gambler, in which pure luck was the chief factor, and the chances of all the players were fairly divided by the continual passage of the box.

Play at White's became notorious almost from the first, and the club became the object of a great deal of criticism from people who were opposed to dice or cards. It was a "pit of destruction" to one, the "bane of the English aristocracy" to another. Lord Lyttleton dreaded that a descendant might become a member and shake down the oaks of Hagley in the dice-box. Mr. Pope notices the doings of two of the early plungers at the club, the Duke of Bedford and Sir Theodore Jansen, and there is hardly a volume of letters or memoirs of the first half of the eighteenth century which does not contain an account of some outrageous cast at White's in which a whole fortune changed hands in a moment. The ordinary incident of an evening at White's, the losing of an odd thousand or two, attracted no notice. Sometimes reference to such trifles appear in the letters of some man who happened to be present. Thus Richard Rigby takes occasion to mention that Bob Bertie won a thousand, and that my Lord Masham was "fool enough to lose three thousand to Lord Bolingbroke."

But at frequent intervals some portentous cast was made; a young man was ruined at a throw, and the whole town rang with the rumour and with execrations of the club. Young Mr. Harvey of Chigwell, for instance, lost £100,000 to Mr. O'Birne, an Irish gamester. "You can never pay me," said O'Birne. "Yes, my estate will sell for the money," was the spirited reply. "No," said O'Birne, "I will win but ten thousand, and you shall throw for the odd ninety." They did so and Harvey won, lived to become an admiral, and to fight under Nelson at Trafalgar.

Such were a few only of the incidents of the gaming at White's which attracted attention from their sensational nature, but the distractions of hazard were by no means confined to the clubs and coffee-houses. It was a necessary qualification of a courtier of George the Second to be prepared to sit down with that monarch and the Suffolks and Walmodens and the other picturesque appanages of the court and lose a comfortable sum. Twelfth Night was always a fixture for a sitting of more than ordinary importance at St. James's. On one of these occasions luck was in favour of Lord Chesterfield, who won so much money that he was afraid to carry it home with him through the streets, and was seen by Queen Caroline from a private window of the palace to trip up the staircase to the Countess of Suffolk's apartments. He was never in favour at court afterwards. There were great doings, too, at court on Twelfth Night of 1753, when the king and court sat down to play

“for the benefit of the groom porter.” We may suppose that so much a cast was given to that official, but some of the royal players benefited as well, for we read in the *Gentleman's Magazine* that the Duke of Cumberland rose a winner of £3000, and that the losers were the Duke of Grafton and Lords Huntingdon, Holdérness, Ashburnham, and Hertford.

Under such distinguished patronage the fashion for gaming spread, and half the doings of the society of which Mr. Horace Walpole was the minute historian, appear through an atmosphere of hazard, or loo, or faro. The young Duke of Hamilton, for instance, who married the incomparable Miss Gunning in such haste with a curtain ring, ogled that lady down the length of Lord Chesterfield's saloon, and paid so little attention to his game that he lost a thousand pounds at a hand. Papers of the didactic type like the *Guardian* published portentous homilies on the dangers of feminine gambling, occasioned by reports which appeared at regular intervals in the news-sheets of Lady This or Miss That having lost three thousand guineas at loo. There are delightful touches on the feminine side of the craze scattered about the literature of the period. There was Goldsmith's lady, for instance, who played on her deathbed with the parson, won all his money, and expired in the act of dealing for a final game in which her funeral expenses were the stake. There was the other lady, too, who being admonished by a divine on the evils of gaming, including the great waste of time, agreed with the remark that

there was indeed a prodigious deal of time wasted in dealing.

Hazard at the clubs and in fashionable society was conducted with all decorum. It was unfashionable and unpardonable to show any display of feeling at losses or gains. The absence of anything like a scene at these sittings in high circles, where the circumstances were calculated to produce very varied emotions in the players, is remarkable. Neither was there ever an imputation of unfair dealing in such society. But as the taste for the dice-box spread into lower circles, organised cheating at low taverns and gaming-houses became a regular profession, and very demonstrative proceedings on the part of players were of daily occurrence. Dice loaded on one side with small quantities of metal so as to insure certain numbers turning up were used by cheats; more frequently a pair of dice were made so numbered that certain combinations could not be thrown with them. One of these numbers was chosen by the caster, who substituted the false dice for the fair ones in the preliminary rattle, and this number after the cast had been made became the chance of the setters. The caster, thus secure from loss, went on throwing until either his own chance turned up or he "threw out" under the rules, when the box passed on. Even with fair dice there were ways of cheating. It was said that dice could be brought out of the box in certain combinations in which they were placed in the box; the "stamp" was a recognised cast by which the cubes

were merely uncovered without throwing ; a " dribble " was a slow pouring out which allowed of the clever manipulation of a cube on the table by an expert, and at times the dice were thrown clean off the table in order that a confederate might change them either for fair or false ones as circumstances demanded.

It is no matter of surprise that the incidents which occurred at the disreputable establishments where such practices were common were often of a most exhilarating character. The papers of the middle of the century are full of reports of such occurrences, which often engaged the attention of the magistrates, and not seldom led to judicial proceedings at the Old Bailey, and to those dismal processions to Tyburn which were the most popular of spectacular exhibitions in those days. Every man of the company at a low hazard house, though himself quite prepared to cheat, was virtue itself in resisting cheating in others. The practice of tampering with dice was so well recognised that they made a rule to meet the difficulty, which allowed of a setter to call for a fresh set of cubes up to the very moment of the fall of the cast on the table. It is easy to understand the chagrin of a caster who had successfully smuggled loaded dice into the box, and saw his successful main anticipated and extinguished by a call for fresh dice while his cast was actually in the air. Such an incident was often followed by a free fight of a dangerous nature, in which the chairs and other movables were not the only weapons employed, like the general *mêlée* which is presented

with much vigour in the "Kick up at a Hazard Table," one of Mr. Rowlandson's most spirited plates.

There is a famous anecdote of Lord Stair and his brother at a house of this sort, which is very illuminative of the amenities of such places. They had both set the caster and won his stake. He threw down the box and cursed the brothers to all eternity. They made no reply, but took up the box and coolly made a cast each as to which should have the pleasure of running the caster through the body. Lord Stair won. "O Stair, Stair," said his brother, "you have always been more fortunate in life than I."

The frenzy of losers at the tables sometimes took astonishing forms. There is record of a ruined man seizing the edge of the table in his teeth and dying in the act. The company fled horrified, and he was found by the watch, dead, with his eyes open, his face distorted, and his teeth driven far into the wood of the table. A Frenchman was seen to ram a billiard ball down his throat, whence it was removed by a surgeon; an Irishman put the lighted candle into his mouth. A gamester, whose nonchalance at repeated losses was remarked upon, opened his shirt and showed his breast all lacerated by his own fingernails. But connoisseurs declared that the most awful form of emotion was that when men wept like statues without moving a muscle of their face, and with nothing to show they were alive except the tears running down their cheeks. On the other hand, there is a delightful story of a winner who, when he realised

a large sum, straightway made arrangements for food, clothing, washing, and lodging for ten years, in order to be able to look forward to that period of gaming undisturbed by any anxiety.

There seems to have been a lull in the rage for hazard following the vogue of whist, which was marked by the publication of Hoyle's Treatise in 1742. Whist, it would seem, was first played in England by people of humble station. Long before it mounted to the drawing-room it was a favourite game in the servants' hall under the strange title of "swobbers." Then some tradesmen who met at the Crown Coffee-house discovered the merits of the game, studied its rules, and brought it into notice, and Hoyle's Treatise established the game as a permanent favourite and created a new profession, that of teacher of whist to the quality.

Although whist never appealed to the real votary of the dice-box, it was a most important factor in spreading the love of gaming amongst the middle and lower classes. Hazard required a large company, a special table, and a considerable amount of ready money. Whist was played in holes and corners, at taverns and coffee-houses, by small tradesmen, clerks and apprentices. The game also lent itself as a ready instrument of cheating to the sharpers, and these gentry soon evolved a complete system of signs and symbols for use with confederates either playing or looking on. Blowing the nose meant a good hand, taking snuff a bad one; a cough conveyed information of an honour;

a confederate looking over the hands of opponents declared their strength or weakness by the manipulation of a tobacco pipe, called "piping." Exclamations in conversation, such as "Indeed," "Truly," "Upon my word," "I assure you," suggested leads of hearts, diamonds, spades, or clubs. Cards bent into "Kingston Bridge," or pared at the edges for certainty of cutting, fingers held up at looking-glasses, and scores of other devices were put into practice for the beguilement of the prosperous tradesman or young city merchant, who were usually the victims of the profession. There are curious treatises on the subject of cheating written with such a mastery of detail as could only have emanated from the sharper himself, and it became a practice in the more presentable houses to run curtains on rods meeting at the centre of the table, so as to separate each player in a cubicle of his own.

One of the most famous of the incidents of the public whist tables is enshrined in a venerable anecdote, which is well known but still worthy of quotation. A very prominent figure of the public play tables of the middle of the century was one Roche, a tavern bully nicknamed the Tyger, from his ferocious aspect and manners. The Tyger's reputation was much enhanced when, after a dispute with Lord March, he took that nobleman by the ears and lifted him out of the room. But his fame chiefly rests on his treatment of a foreign count, whom he noticed cheating at a game of whist. He took up the pointed candle snuffers and pinned

the count's hand to the table, with the remark, "I ask your pardon if the ace of spades is not under your hand," which indeed proved to be the case.

There was another slight lull in high play in fashionable circles when the young king came to the throne in 1760, and gaming at court was banished with other picturesque customs which prevailed at St. James's under George II. George III. would have none of it, and withdrew his countenance from all connected with the great doings of the dice-box. Even White's took its cue from the courtiers who flocked at the club and intrigued against Mr. Pitt and the Whigs, and the gaming at the club sank to quite innocent proportions. It was probably the altered aspect of affairs at White's which induced some score of young men of fashion, many of them members of the old club, to form a new one more to their liking. It is certain that Almack's club in Pall Mall, afterwards so famous as Brooks's, was opened in 1764 for no other purpose than as a rendezvous for thorough-paced gamesters.

Private gaming undoubtedly reached its height at Almack's during the twenty-five years which followed the opening of the club. Early in the present century Mr. William Crockford presided over transactions which possibly surpassed in amount the sums which changed hands at Almack's, but, as we shall see, play at Crockford's was not of a private character, but partook of the nature of the proceedings at Monte Carlo to-day.

All the glories of hazard revived at the new club

in Pall Mall. There was no trace of the traditional Whig politics of Brooks's in the early list of Almack's; the members were young men of fashion without exception, and they displayed a juvenile ardour in their doings at the club which attracted every eligible gambler in London within a very short space of time. The town soon began to ring with the effects of the mains cast at Almack's, and the encounters between noted plungers at the hazard table in the great room divided the attention of the town with the last news from the revolted States, or the latest blunder of Lord North and the King.

Owing to the identification of the name of Mr. Charles James Fox with the very choicest of the exploits at Almack's, the gaming of that celebrated period has become almost a part of English history. Public attention at the time was fascinated by the contrast between the inspired orator of the House of Commons, and the ruined spendthrift at Almack's cleaned out of his last shilling and asleep with his head on the table after a continuous sitting of twelve hours. To-day it is a standing wonder that Fox's reputation should have survived the doings of those first twenty years at Almack's, and that the real merits of his great nature should have drowned all censorious recollection of the vices which he only assumed.

Fox, of course, was only one of many; to make up a typical company at Almack's between 1770 and 1780, we should gather with him round the green-table in the great room his brother Stephen and his

cousin Lord Ilchester, his bosom friends Fitzpatrick and Hare, Lord March, George Selwyn and the young Earl of Carlisle, Burgoyne and Rodney, when not on duty abroad, and Lord Derby, Lord Bessborough, and the Duke of Devonshire. A little later we should include Lord Robert Spencer, Lord Cholmondeley, Lord Thanet, and Mr. Dick Thompson. Gibbon would be at the fire-place with his snuff-box, Garrick would look in after the theatre, and Horace Walpole limp in from the saleroom, but not to play. Horry loved nothing better than to win fifty guineas from a dowager at loo, but he never risked the proceeds of his fat pensions and sinecures with the plungers at White's and Almack's.

The doings of those gentlemen, however, had great interest for Horace, and fill a not inconsiderable space in his entertaining letters and memoirs, where he has left us a description of such a gathering as we have supposed. "They began," says Horace, speaking of the youthful punters at Almack's, "by pulling off their embroidered clothes, and put on frieze great-coats, or turned their coats inside outwards for luck. They put on pieces of leather such as are worn by footmen when they clean knives, to save their lace ruffles; and to guard their eyes from the light and to prevent tumbling their hair they wore high-crowned hats with broad brims and adorned with flowers and ribbons, masks to conceal their emotions, and each gamester had a small neat stand by him to hold a wooden bowl with an edge of ormolu to hold his rouleaux."

Of all that careless company Mr. Charles James Fox was the most conspicuous, partly because he played for the excitement of play alone, and was, as it would seem, absolutely indifferent to the consequences of his losses to himself or his friends, and also because he gained a great reputation in the House of Commons almost from the moment of his election as a member, and the public was naturally interested in the contrast between the heaven-sent orator of Westminster and the improvident spendthrift at the club. Walpole recorded with some humorous strictures that Mr. Fox lost £11,000 at a sitting which began on the 4th of February of 1771, and ended at five o'clock of the afternoon of the following day. On the morrow he delivered a speech on a religious question at Westminster, having prepared himself for the effort, as Mr. Gibbon pointed out, "by passing twenty-two hours in the pious exercise of hazard." "After the debate," continues Walpole, "he went to White's, where he drank till seven in the morning, thence to Almack's, where he won £6000, and between three and four in the afternoon he set out for Newmarket." Within the week he was back again in London and lost another £10,000. His brother Stephen in the meantime lost £11,000 at Almack's, so that the brothers in three sittings within seven days lost a sum of £32,000. Gaming ran in the Fox blood of that generation, and the passion may perhaps be regarded as a dispensation of Providence which incited these young men, both under twenty-five, to choose

a speedy method of returning to the British public the vast wealth which had been accumulated in a short time by very questionable means by their father, Lord Holland. Their cousin, Lord Stavordale, the son of Lord Ilchester, who was a true Fox though he bore the name of Strangways, was another of the generous youths of the hazard-table. There is a pleasing glimpse of this young gentleman also preserved by Walpole. "Lord Stavordale lost £11,000 last Tuesday, but recovered it at one great hand at hazard. He swore a great oath. 'Now, if I had been playing deep, I might have won millions.'"

It would fill a volume to mention the recorded incidents of the great period of hazard which may be read in the many histories of gaming which have appeared during the last few years. Hazard was practised in almost every rank of society where men met together, and in all parts of the town. There were notable houses for the accommodation of the butchers and drovers of Smithfield, for Jews in Houndsditch, and for the apprentices and tradesmen of the city. The lawyers of the Inns of Court must have been among the most devoted supporters of the game, if we may believe an anecdote of the Middle Temple. The floor of the hall of that great society was taken up for repairs towards the end of the century, when it was found that no less than a hundred pair of dice had accumulated through a few holes in the boarding. The game has even left its mark on our language. To "crab" in the slang vocabulary

is to speak disparagingly of a thing or a person, and is derived from a term of the game given to a combination of the dice which meant inevitable loss. There can be little doubt, also, that the slang expression to "nick," in the sense of taking possession, is a survival of the old term at hazard, the "nick," which allowed of the gathering in of the stake by the man who was lucky enough to throw it.

Somewhere between the years 1775 and 1780 the rage for the old game of hazard, which had been the favourite with gamblers since the beginning of the century, yielded its place quite suddenly to a round game at cards called faro. Faro, which is still popular in the United States, and is not unknown in illegal clubs kept by foreigners in Soho to-day, was an adaptation from the much older game of basset, which was the favourite game at court in Stuart times. Faro was played between the dealer or keeper of the "bank" and the rest of the company, and, like hazard, it gave excitement to as many people as could find room round the table. The idea of the game was quite simple, and recalls the "Self and Company," played by children. Each of the company placed his stake upon any card of the thirteen he chose, and when the stakes were all set the dealer took a full pack and dealt it into two heaps, one on his right hand the other on his left, two cards at a time. He paid the stakes placed on such cards as fell on the right-hand pack, and received those of such as fell on his left hand. The dealing of each pair of cards was called a "coup," and the

dealer paid or received such stakes as were decided after each coup.

Such was the crude idea of the game of faro which engaged the attention of all London at the end of the last century, but there were numerous variations which gave the game a great interest to all sorts of gamblers. The bold and reckless spirit having won on the first coup might leave his winnings to accumulate until he reached a point in the game which was known as *soixante et le va*, when he could claim sixty-three times his original stake. Other rules allowed a timid player to withdraw his winnings each time and leave only the sum he first ventured, and between such extremes of boldness and caution there were endless facilities which gave all sorts of interesting options to the player, and provided the game with its undoubted fascination. Faro, indeed, was full of incident, and without a dull moment; there were no long intervals for dealing or shuffling, and it had a plausible air of fairness as between the dealer and the company. As a fact, however, the odds were enormously in favour of the dealer. He claimed all ties, that is, when the same card appeared on both packs, the last card but one of the pack delivered its stake to him upon whichever hand it fell, and there was the impalpable but very real advantage of what was known as the "pull of the table" in his favour. The deal never passed on, a faro table being known as a "bank" which was kept by an individual, or a partnership of two or more persons, and enormous sums were realised by such concerns.

Brooks's led the fashion in faro, as it had done in hazard a few years earlier. The game at the club was conducted by one or two partnerships, which were astonishingly successful at the expense of the general body of players. Charles Fox and Fitzpatrick were early in the field, for in 1781 we learn from the invaluable Walpole that his "nephew, Lord Cholmondeley, the banker *a la mode*," was demolished. He and Sir Willoughby Aston went early one night to the club and set up a bank of their own. When Fox and Fitzpatrick arrived, they resented the competition, attacked the bank, and won above £4000. "There," said Fox, "so should all usurpers be served." Lord Cholmondeley, however, recovered, and he and his partner, "Mr. Dick Thompson of Grosvenor Square," had a very successful career at the club. Nephew Cholmondeley, it seems, confided to Lord Foley that he had won £44,000 in 1787 alone. "Gaming was never higher," said Mr. Daniel Pulteney to his patron the Duke of Rutland, "and the pharaoh bankers have had some good pidgeons. A Mr. Barton was at one time out with a sitting at Dick Thompson's bank £92,000, and cut, losing £24,000." Another celebrated bank at Brooks's, running at the same time, was a partnership between Lord Robert Spencer and Mr. Hare. The profits of this business, for it was nothing else, enabled Lord Robert to retire on a landed estate. The success of the faro banks at Brooks's was such that it led to the game being forbidden at White's by a special rule of the managers.

The passion for faro, however, was by no means confined to the clubs; its advantages to the dealer were soon recognised, and the facilities it offered to all who could provide a room and a company gave an opportunity to a score of women of fashion to combine business with pleasure. Faro banks were kept at half the great houses in town. Some of the younger men at Brooks's chattered about the enormous sums that the keepers of the table were making; Lord Cholmondeley, it was said, had whispered to Lord Foley that he and his partner had cleared £44,000 in a season; Lord Foley passed the news on to Lady Duncannon, Lady Duncannon mentioned it to her sister the Duchess of Devonshire, and the sisters, invoking the aid of Lady Harrington and a friend of hers who knew where he could borrow £1000, got together a fund and opened a private faro bank under the most fashionable auspices, which we may take as typical of a score of others in the west end of the town. All the drawing-rooms in London, indeed, were ankle deep in cards, for it was the custom for the dealer to fling the pack across the room at the end of each deal of faro, and the players each consumed a duplicate card with every stake they laid. Playing-cards were so common at that time in private houses that it was usual to write notes upon the backs of them, and those notes may often be found among the correspondence of those days.

As time went on there was hardly a house of note in the West End which did not run its faro table.

The Prince of Wales and the Duke of York gave their royal countenance to the fashion by appearing daily at one or other of them, and it became the custom for a lady to hire a dealer at five guineas a night to conduct operations, and to suggest that the profits of the table went to him and not to the hostess. This, of course, was a very transparent device to disguise the commercial nature of the transaction; it gave a thin varnish of propriety to the proceedings, but deceived nobody. People who were sulky at losing their money talked dreadful scandal, and the whole society of the day was permeated with the sordid suspicions which until that day had been confined to the low hazard rooms at the taverns and dingy houses of the city.

The vogue for faro was finally killed by an open scandal which came into the courts in the year 1797. Three ladies of position—Lady Buckinghamshire, Lady E. Luttrell, and Mrs. Sturt—were each fined £50 for playing at a public gaming-table. The “public gaming-table” was kept at Lady Buckinghamshire’s own house by a man named Martindale, one of a family who lived by organising the pleasures of the aristocracy. Martindale, as a fact, was only the convenient dealer hired at so much a night, but he suffered as a principal of the concern, and was fined £250. Lady Buckinghamshire’s bank had been a prodigious success, and it might have gone on for years if her ladyship had been well advised. The bank, however, had been robbed of £500 by some unknown person, and instead of hushing the matter up, she was

silly enough to accuse a servant of the robbery and to dismiss him. This individual, feeling himself ill-used, gave information to the police as to the real nature of her ladyship's assemblies, and the details of those gatherings were investigated by the bench, with the result we have mentioned. Mr. Gillray, the caricaturist, seized upon the occasion to produce some of his most ferocious designs, in which these ladies and others were represented as "Pharaoh's daughters in the pillory and at the cart tail," being flogged by Lord Kenyon, who had delivered some very excellent remarks upon the prevalence of gaming in high quarters from the bench in another gambling case which had come before him. "If any prosecution of this nature is fairly brought before me," said his Lordship, "and the parties are justly convicted, whatever may be their rank or station in the country, though they should be the first ladies in the land, they shall certainly exhibit themselves in the pillory." Mr. Gillray gave very adequate pictorial expression to that threat of the judge, with recognisable portraits of Lord and Lady Buckinghamshire, Mrs. Concannon, Lady Archer, Lady Mount Edgumbe, and others who had the reputation of knowing more than they ought about faro. The public exposure in the courts, and the popularity of Mr. Gillray's prints, which were circulated in sets from Humphrey's in St. James's Street, like books from Mudie's to-day, extinguished the popularity of the game, and its vogue expired as suddenly as it had arisen in the year 1798.

We have been chiefly concerned, so far, with play in distinguished circles, but the rage had gradually and surely spread downwards, and by the beginning of the present century had infected all classes in the country. About the time that whist was becoming popular as a medium for gambling, a game of pure chance was introduced from the Continent. Some speculators set up a table at Tunbridge Wells for playing E.O., a species of roulette played with a ball on a special table, and did well at it. It was a game which lent itself admirably to cheating; the cubs which surrounded the table into which the ball rolled were manipulated so as to insure a win to the table-keeper; inclines were made on the surface of the table imperceptible to the eye, but sufficient to conduct the ball into winning cubs; the cloth was waxed and ironed smooth at particular places with the same object and result. Roly poly, as the game was popularly called, had a great vogue, and became a standing attraction at race meetings, country fairs, and even in the streets of London. The game provided a fat living for gangs of sharpers, who went on circuit like his Majesty's judges, hung together in a confederacy, and extended their organised operations on popular lines to London and the larger cities.

Turf transactions were often auxiliary to the gaming operations of these gentlemen; on the other hand, the profits of roly poly gave a start to more than one shining light of the turf. As instances of both we may mention Colonel O'Kelly, the owner of

Eclipse, who was placed on his legs by successful dealings with the E.O. table at race meetings; and Mr. William Crockford, the prince of gaming-house proprietors, was a product of the combination of racing and roly poly.

The immediate result of the organisation's operations in London was the establishment of cheap gaming-houses all over the town. Hazard revived, or rather descended from Brooks's and the Cocoa Tree to shady houses in Soho, Covent Garden, and the City, and people of humble condition were taught the joys and the dangers of roulette, *rouge et noir*, and macao for small stakes. Morley's was a noted cheap hazard-house in the City, Miller's a famous hell of the low type in Leicester Street, where loaded dice were habitually used, and drunken clerks relieved of their employers' money a hundred pounds at the time. John Taylor, of the Bedford Arms, Covent Garden, stood a siege of some hours against the sheriff's officers, having thoughtfully provided his passages with doors of wrought-iron. No. 19 Great Suffolk Street had a subterranean passage into an empty house in Whitcombe Street, through which proprietors and customers escaped when the place was raided. At No. 3 Leicester Square there was an exit over the roofs, but one gentleman mistaking it was smoked out of the chimney by the officers. Every other house in the piazza of Covent Garden seems to have been raided, but the profits were so great that the fines were easily paid, and if a man here or there was im-

prisoned, his partners carried on the business at another place during his absence, and he came out to share the profits which had accumulated while he was doing his term. "I can easily pay £500," said Mr. Miller of Leicester Square after a second raid; he paid that sum, did his two years, and opened again round the corner.

The mischief these places did is almost incalculable; bankruptcies, embezzlements, duels, and suicides resulting from gaming were of weekly occurrence, and it would seem that half the tradesmen and clerks of London were before the magistrates or the coroners of the last years of the last century and the first quarter of this. Men sat at these houses for a week at a time, and ended by losing the clothes from their back and being turned out in their stockings and shirt, and perhaps the climax was reached when two men were interrupted in preparations for an execution on a lamp-post in the north of London, the one having lost his life to the other for the sake of the clothes to be gathered from the corpse.

There was a constant interchange of personnel both of proprietors and players between houses of different grades. A man who had started some low house in Covent Garden or the City, swelled out on the plunder of clerks and tradesmen until he was substantial enough to open a house of more pretensions farther west. On the other hand, a gamester who began in St. James's more often than not sank through different stages of raffishness until his final efforts were transactions in

half crowns at the dirty resorts of butchers and apprentices in Houndsditch or the Barbican.

The success of the profession of table keeping was very evident by the opening years of the present century, when a whole shoal of pretentious establishments, where public gaming could be enjoyed in luxurious surroundings, sprang up in the very heart of the West End. St. James's and the very precincts of the court itself produced a swarm of these places in irreproachable circumstances, every one founded and conducted by men who had humbler experience elsewhere. Hazard and faro had gone out at the older clubs, and club gaming of the period was represented by extremely deep play at whist at White's and Brooks's. Macao flourished for a while at Wattiers, where the members lived on each other for some eight or ten years until their estates disappeared, and the club expired by the flight of its supporters to Boulogne. Beau Brummell, who asked the waiter for a flat candlestick and a pistol, and was immediately obliged with a pair of loaded weapons by a madman with whom he was playing, was a typical member of Wattiers. *Rouge et noir* and French hazard were played at some of the second-rate clubs like the Union and Graham's, but these games were the chief support of the hells of St. James's, and were played little elsewhere.

No. 77 St. James's Street was a well-known house devoted to *rouge et noir*, where the stake was limited to £50, which prevented any pigeon from recouping himself with a great plunge. There does not seem to

be any record of cheating at houses of this class, but there was a steady turn in favour of the table which rendered it quite unnecessary, and usury at high rates added very much to the profits. Opposite No. 77 was a small house devoted to hazard exclusively, much frequented by Guardsmen, whom it steadily relieved of arrears of pay accumulated during the Peninsular War. Fielder Morley and Carlos kept the corner house of Bennet Street, known as the "House with the Red Baize Door." They had a service of plate at this establishment which was made from silver coin won from their clients. Abbot, Watson, and other partners kept a house at No. 10 St. James's Square, the "Pigeon Hole," where the stake was limited to what was considered moderate dimensions, which, however, was high enough to allow of an annual profit of £30,000. There were two houses in King Street, Mrs. Leache's at No. 6, and Mr. Davis's at No. 10. No. 27 Bury Street was one of the temporary resting-places of Mr. William Crockford in his wonderful career from the fish shop in Fleet Street to the palace in St. James's Street opposite White's. Smith, Pope, & Co., at 77 Jermyn Street, and Taylor, Phillips, & Co., at 71 Pall Mall, were famous and prosperous men in their day, and gave their sons and daughters a good start in life. Roubel's, at No. 40 Pall Mall, was a house run in the French mode, where the cookery was good, and losses always paid without grumbling, which was not invariably the case elsewhere. Roubel and his partners did exceedingly well

on the whole, but they suffered a serious reverse when a party of pigeons dressed themselves up as officers of the law, raided the place, and cleared away some thousands in gold which were on the table at the time.

Such were the houses at which round games flourished after their decline at the great clubs. They steadily drained the pockets of the aristocracy of England for nearly half a century, and there is scarcely a great family to-day which does not still feel the effects of the play that went on within their doors sixty years ago. All the efforts of the law as it stood were unable to suppress them; they suborned witnesses, bribed police officers, and, if the worst came to the worst, paid fabulous sums to keep articles out of newspapers and cases out of court. The history of these places is contained in such productions as the "Greeks," the "Pigeons," and the "Academicians," written by men who had been ruined at the tables, and published at great risk by Stockdale of Pall Mall. They are dreary reading at the best, with their tag quotations from Virgil and Horace, their names in asterisks, and their slang in italics, all in the style of Tom and Jerry, surely the most atrocious prose into which the English language has ever been twisted. But they contain the facts and doings of a phase of life which had profound results, and they prepared the ground for the final conflagration when play burnt itself out at Crockford's.

William Crockford was originally a fishmonger of

sporting tastes who kept a small shop in the Strand near Temple Bar. He began his career as a gamester by punting for half-crowns at a low gaming-house kept by a man named Smith in King's Place, and he was accustomed to return to the fish-shop with his winnings late at night, and drop them wrapped in brown paper into the basement without entering the house. He probably learnt the capabilities of gaming as a profession at King's Place, but his first real start in life was a successful turf transaction. Crockford began his career as a table keeper by the purchase for £100 of a fourth share in a little hell at No. 5 King Street; his partners were men named Abbot, Houldsworth, and Austin, and their doings were not above suspicion. He appeared next at a French hazard bank at No. 81 Piccadilly, where he and his partners were believed to have cleared £200,000 in a very short time. This is not surprising, when one reads of five men losing £100,000 at a sitting to the fishmonger and his partner Gye. This was the sum that Lord Thanet, Lord Granville, Mr. Ball Hughes, and two others contributed to the concern by a single night's "play." It was persistently said that cheating was practised at No. 81, and false dice, declared to have been found on the place, were exhibited in Bond Street for some time. It is quite certain that Crockford was sued by dozens of his victims, and that he kept every one of these actions out of court by compromise before the hearing. After the disclosures in Piccadilly, Crockford lay low for a time, during which his name was

not much in evidence, though he kept himself in touch with the progress of gaming as a sleeping partner in one of the more fashionable of the hells of St. James's. It was shortly before 1827 that he conceived the idea of gathering the cream of the playing public under one roof, and Crockford's Club, built at a cost of £94,000, was the result.

There is one thing, and one only, to be said in favour of Mr. Crockford's enterprise, which is, that this establishment did away with the practice of gentlemen playing against each other for large sums. At Crockford's the game was one of Gentlemen *versus* Players, the players being always Mr. Crockford's officials at the French hazard table, and the sole object of his business was to win the money of his patrons. He had no other sources of profit; his establishment was an exclusive club with a very low subscription, and was open to such gentlemen only as could convince the committee of their eligibility. For their subscription, which was so small that members who did not gamble were accustomed to make a sort of offering of conscience money, by flinging a ten pound note on the play table at the end of the season, the best cookery and the finest wines in London were supplied to them gratis, and they had the companionship of the most fashionable male society of the day. Crockford was wise enough to leave all the social arrangements to a committee of gentlemen who conducted the ballots, elected and rejected whom they chose, and made entry to Crockford's as difficult as to

White's or Brooks's. The new club, in fact, at once took a tone similar to that of those aristocratic bodies, whose members were made eligible for election to Crockford's by one of its first rules. In exchange for the princely accommodation of his house, and such fare as was unobtainable at any other club in London for love or money, Crockford asked for nothing in return but that gentlemen should condescend to take a cast at his table at French hazard.

French hazard was a variety of the old game in which a good many of the fairly equal chances between caster and setter were rearranged in favour of the setter, the setter at Crockford's being Mr. Crockford himself as represented by his croupiers. The nicks of the old English hazard, for example, were restricted in favour of the setter, there was a fee called "box money" paid by every caster as he took the box, and there were other advantages in favour of the bank known, as at faro, as the "pull of the table." The working of the "pull of the table" was very well explained by one of Crockford's victims before the Royal Commission of 1844, whose report resulted in the present Gaming Acts. That gentleman declared that the "pull of the table" absorbed a hundred pounds in a little over two hours from any player who took the box regularly as it came to him, and that quite independently of any win or loss on the cast itself.

The men who walked into Crockford's with their eyes open to encounter these odds were the pick of the

society of the day, the men who had fought the battles of the country under Wellington, and men who were making great reputations at Westminster, as well as mere butterflies like the Dandies who loafed through life at White's. They were most of them men of exceptional parts, and distinguished for shrewdness and ability in one walk of life or another, and yet in the short space of ten years, between the opening of the club in 1827 and the accession of her Majesty, their losses converted Mr. Crockford into a millionaire at least. There is absolutely no record of any considerable sum of money ever won at the place by a player. Mr. Thomas Duncombe, the eminent Radical reformer, once took away £1600 from the club, but the main result of his dealings with Crockford was a deficit of £132,000 in his affairs. Mr. Auriol, who was called "Crockford's Ugly Duckling," on account of the voracity with which he ate his suppers, had some fleeting luck in small sums, but there is no other mention of a single penny being taken away from his doors.

On the other hand, there is ample evidence that the gentlemen of England marched in a compact band through the fishmonger's establishment in St. James's Street, and left the greater part of their substance behind, and it is no exaggeration to say, as was remarked indeed at the time by men who partook of its pleasures, that Crockford absorbed the entire ready money of a generation, and much of its landed estate.

Some of these losses are recorded in the memoirs of

the time, but only a very small proportion of the whole, and they may be taken merely as an index of what went on at the club. The second Earl of Sefton left £200,000 in Crockford's rooms during his lifetime, and his son the third Earl, who was also a noted victim, honoured an acceptance of his father's after his death in 1838 for another £40,000. Sir Godfrey Webster met Mr. George Payne on the steps of the club and confessed to having just received a "facer." The "facer" was the loss of £50,000 at a sitting. Another Baronet lost £7000 at a cast, and £20,000 in the evening, of which the cast was but an incident. Lord Rivers, Lord Chesterfield, Lord Anglesey, Lord Combermere, Mr. Ball Hughes, Lord Granville, Count D'Orsay, and a score of other well-known men of the day, were all losers of enormous sums, and the smaller victims were to be counted by hundreds. All the memoir writers of those times, from Croker to Gronow, recorded the losses at Crockford's on almost every page of their diaries, and yet wrote of the decay of the famous club almost with tears. "*O noctes cœnæque delm,*" wrote Captain Gronow, moved by the sight of the old club transformed into a restaurant before the present Devonshire Club occupied the building. "Alas poor Crockey's, shorn of its former glory, has become a sort of refuge for the destitute, a cheap dining-house. How are the mighty fallen; those who remember Crockford's in all its glory cast, as they pass, a look of unavailing regret at its dingy walls, with many a sigh to the memory of the pleasant

days they passed there, and the gay companions and noble gentlemen who have long since gone to their last home."

Nominally Crockford's was extinguished by the Gaming Act of 1845, but its glory had departed at least five years earlier. Mr. Crockford having won all the money about the town, began to make preparations for a retirement with his winnings; he began to exercise great care in cashing cheques, refused all credit for the counters with which play was conducted, and generally realised his securities. There is no doubt he anticipated the parliamentary interference with his profession which came later, and, with an astuteness which was quite typical of his whole career, withdrew from the concern before the crash came. Whatever his real position may have been with relation to the premises when the parliamentary commission began its labours, he managed to conceal them. He was dragged from his retirement to give evidence, but his examination was quite fruitless. He declared that he had made over his club to the committee of gentlemen who had always managed the social side of the undertaking, five years before, because his age prevented him from looking after the business as he ought. When asked as to the former transactions with his clients, he refused all information. It was not for a humble individual like himself, he said, to know anything about the private affairs of gentlemen of position. He continued dealings in turf matters at a smaller house in St. James's Street until he died, and

there is a gruesome legend that his body was put into the chair he usually occupied in the window on the day of his death, which was also the day of a great race, so that there might be no repudiation of the vast liabilities which were depending upon the meeting.

High play in England, as we believe, burnt itself out in those orgies at Crockford's; there has certainly never since been a revival of anything like the doings at the fishmonger's. There were good reasons for the abandonment of the cult of the dice-box in high circles apart altogether from the legislative interference of 1845. The absorption of the ready money of an entire generation of the best families in England by an adventurer and by the Jews, who helped his victims to fulfil their obligations to him, was a very good excuse for a change in their taste in the matter of amusement. It happened also that one of the few great scandals connected with gaming in England occurred almost at the moment when Crockford was preparing to retire with the plunder. It is probable, indeed, that the great scandal at Graham's might of itself have killed the fashion; it is certain that it had as much to do with its decline as the disasters suffered by the pigeons at the hands of Mr. Crockford. Mr. Thackeray, who remembered those times, and who wrote of the incident at Graham's, was of that opinion.

At Graham's Club in St. James's Street a man of an old and honoured name was detected cheating at whist, and was denounced as a dishonest trickster in a news-

paper, the *Satirist*. He brought an action against his accusers, failed in it, went abroad, and died. Such were the bare outlines of the tragedy, but the details of the trial disclosed ugly features in the circumstances which had much interest for thoughtful people, and undoubtedly tended to bring the whole institution of play for high stakes between gentlemen into great disrepute.

There were witnesses at that trial, some of them men of assured and even great position, who admitted that they had detected the accused in his cheating a hundred times before the exposure and yet had held their peace. As the game was whist, and the same parties met and played regularly together, it is obvious that others must have shared in the proceeds of the accused man's infamy. But his clubmates, who swore to having seen him repeatedly perform the trick known as *sauter la coupe*, that is, insure the turn up of a king or ace on his own deal, had apparently no scruples about sitting down with him in the same game, and presumably some of them were his partners on occasion. At any rate, he had no difficulty in finding partners in a private club, and such partners were either partners of his guilt, or were themselves the victims of a guiltily suppressed knowledge which was common property among numbers of their clubmates.

The sordid details of the play at Graham's, as recorded in the account of that trial, are astonishing. One witness swore that he had seen the culprit *sauter la coupe* "fifty or a hundred times." When asked

why he did not at once denounce him, this gentleman replied that had he done so before the accused "had been blown upon," he, the witness, would have had no alternative between the window and the door. The circumstances were undoubtedly embarrassing, but this witness surely took no very exalted view of his duties as a gentleman when he refrained from speaking and continued to meet the accused at cards.

Other clubmates of that unhappy man, it appears, had long detected him in the act of marking cards with his thumbnail or by bending, in order to recognise aces or honours, and manipulate them to his own advantage. They had even collected many packs of cards so marked after he had left the table, caused them to be sealed up and attested, and several of such packs were duly produced in court. Another witness swore to having seen the culprit cheat by reversing the cut, so as to insure as a trump the card his own final shuffling had placed at the bottom of the pack. Another still described the hacking cough with which the accused was always seized as he took the cards cut by his adversary on the right, a cough which, he declared, so invariably produced a king as the trump that it was known in the club as ——'s king cough. And yet, as we say, all these men continued to play with this black sheep on terms of amity, and some of them, at least, must have shared in the profits of his backsliding, until a fourth-rate newspaper took up the charge which these bold spirits whispered about the town. The libel action failed, the man was ruined, and died

broken-hearted, and Lord Alvanley made his epitaph :
“ Here lies —— waiting for the last trump.” It was surely time that high play amongst gentlemen at clubs should cease.

Since those days of Crockford’s and Graham’s and the Gaming Act, high play has ceased to be any considerable part of the social life of London at clubs or elsewhere, and its occasional manifestations which will occur to the memory have been incidental only. The passion for the excitement of chance has found other channels for its gratification. We have our organised dealings in “ differences ” on the Stock Exchange, our starting-price merchants, and the columns of our sporting press. The wants of the “ votaries of chance ” of all classes are certainly amply provided for by one or the other of these institutions.

CHAPTER V

THE COCKPIT

NOR the least among the pleasures which a delighted London owed to the happy restoration of his Majesty King Charles the Second, was a revival of the very ancient and popular sport of cock-fighting. The sound of the word has already an antique ring for modern ears. It is only a faint echo to-day of another of those ancient diversions with which Englishmen amused themselves during centuries, the details of which are almost as strange to the average young man of these times as the manœuvres of *retiaris* and *secutor* in the arena, or the steps of the Pyrrhic dance. And yet cock-fighting, like bull and bear baiting, expired unregretted almost in our own times. The Statute-book will tell you that it was 5 & 6 William IV. cap. 59 that did the business and put an end to the joys of the cockpit both in town and country. The sport which had amused English monarchs since the days of the Plantagenets, and had enlisted their particular patronage and support, failed to commend itself to an age of Railways and Reform Bills. So, as we say, the Battle Royal, Long Main, Short Main, and Welch Main, were alike forbidden by the law, the profession

of trainer or walker of fighting-cocks languished in the secluded villages of a score of English counties, and the whole cult of the cockpit was submerged in a moment, amidst the headshakings of a few reactionaries in knee breeches and blue coats, who saw great danger to the British spirit and the British nation in its decline. We seek here to revive its amenities for a short season, to peep into its headquarters at Westminster or Gray's Inn Lane, and to discover if possible its real place among the amusements of our cockney ancestors.

Antiquarians give the sport of the gamecock an imposing ancestry. There were a dozen or more essayists of the last century who, while expressing the opinion of a minority against its barbarities, were very curious about its origin, and illustrated their arguments with all manner of quaint researches. Chief among these was "the ingenious Mr. Pegge," who wrote a very imposing essay in *Archæologia* in the year 1776, in which he refutes many of the theories of his brother sages, and dates the first European cockfight in the days of Themistocles. That general, it seems, was leading the Athenian army against the Persians when he observed two cocks fighting. He stopped the march, called a halt and pointed out to his troops that the birds fought "not for the gods of their country, nor for the monuments of their ancestors, nor glory, nor freedom, nor for their children; but for the sake of victory, and that one may not yield to the other." There was probably a lady in the case,

which, however, the general failed to mention. "From this topic," we are told, "he inspirited the Athenians, who beat the Persians, and a cock-fight to celebrate the event was an annual and even a religious fixture later in Athens." The young Athenians, however, began to see more fun than religion in the opposition of the two cocks, and converted the annual religious festival into a diversion of daily occurrence. Thus, according to the ingenious Mr. Pegge, began the tradition of the sport in Europe, which survived in this country until the other day, as it were.

We have little concern, however, with Mr. Pegge and his theories, or with the views of his opponents, who traced cock-fighting in England to a more direct contact with the East, which is admittedly its home. It is certain that the sport had taken root in England in very early days. Some contend that references by Cæsar to the fighting-cock point to its presence here in pre-Roman times; but the point is not of great interest to us one way or the other. It is more to our purpose that cock-fighting is recorded as the diversion of ingenuous schoolboys by Fitz-Stephen in the reign of Henry the Second; that it was prohibited by Edward the Third; that it was encouraged by Henry the Eighth, who built the first royal cockpit at Whitehall; that it was so much the vogue in high circles in the reign of Charles the First that Vandyck painted a picture of the court watching a match in the royal pit; that Oliver Cromwell quite naturally suppressed the diversion by an Act of 1654, and that,

as we have said, all its ancient glories were revived by the joyful restoration of King Charles the Second. Modern England, as we contend, began with the days of that monarch, or soon after; we propose therefore to confine our survey of the sport to the days of his Majesty, and since.

“Being directed by sight of bills upon the walls,” wrote Mr. Pepys, under date of December the 21st, 1663, “I did go to Shoe Lane to see a cock-fight at a new pit there, a sport I never was at in my life.” We make no apology for giving a long quotation from that astonishing diary, because, as we shall see later, it is the best description of a cock-fight on record. “But, Lord,” continues Mr. Pepys, “to see the strange variety of people—from Parliament man, by name Wildes, that was Deputy-Governor of the Tower when Robinson was Lord Mayor, to the poorest ’prentices, bakers, brewers, butchers, draymen, and what not—and all these fellows one with another in swearing, cursing and betting, and yet I would not but have seen it once. I soon had enough of it, it being strange to observe the nature of these poor creatures; how they will fight till they drop down dead upon the table and strike after they are ready to give up the ghost, not offering to run away when they are weary or wounded past doing further, whereas when a dunghill brood comes, he will, after a sharp stroke that pricks him, run off the stage, and then they wring off his neck without much more ado. Whereas the other they preserve, though their eyes be both

out, for breed only of a true cock of the game. Sometimes a cock that has had ten to one against him will by chance give an unlucky blow, and will strike the other stark dead in a moment, that he never stirs more; but the common rule is that though a cock neither runs nor dies, yet if any man will bet £10 to a crown, and nobody take the bet, the game is given over, and not sooner. One thing more, it is strange to see how people of this poor rank, that look as if they had not bread to put in their mouths, shall bet three or four pounds at one bet and lose it, and yet bet as much the next battle (so they call every match of two cocks), so that one of them will lose £10 or £20 at a meeting; thence having had enough of it."

Mr. Pepys' powers of observation were never better displayed than in this account, which gives, as the result of a first visit, all the essentials of a public cock match—essentials which changed hardly at all until the law stepped in and extinguished the whole institution of cock-fighting in 1835. The squalor of the company, the unyielding bravery of the birds, the chance which might give the victory to either side in a moment, the fascination of the conditions of the sport for gamblers who wanted to risk and win money, the intricacies of the rules for "pounding a cock," the general brutality and love of blood which distinguished the votaries of the sport—all these aspects of cock-fighting, which appear with such astonishing clearness in Mr. Pepys' account of his

single visit to the cockpit—remained as features of the diversion for the next century and a half, and are corroborated by a score of treatises and criticisms ranging over the whole of that period.

There has been a great deal of learned speculation among London topographers as to the exact spots in the town which were devoted at different times to the practice of cock-fighting. They are all agreed that the first known cockpit in London was the Royal Cockpit, built, as Stowe records, by Henry the Eighth, “out of certain old tenements” in Whitehall. The Royal Cockpit continued as the battle-ground of the royal cocks until Cromwell laid his hands upon the court of Charles the First and its diversions; its site became a royal theatre in the days of the Restoration, and is believed to be occupied by a part of the offices of the Board of Trade to-day. Until quite well on in the present century the cockpit gave a name to a room of the Privy Council, where ministers discussed the Royal Speech with their parliamentary followers on the eve of the opening of each session. There was another famous cockpit, vaguely located as “at the back of Gray’s Inn Walk,” which an apparently well-informed contributor to *Notes and Queries* describes as the cockpit of London during the Restoration. Mains were fought here so late as 1752; and there is a very intelligent account of the building by Von Uffenbach, the German traveller, in 1709–10: “There is a house specially built for it (cock-fighting) near Gray’s Inn. The house is round like a tower, and inside just like a

COCK-FIGHTING

DRAWN BY H. ALKEN



theatrum anatomicum, with the benches rising above each other all round, on which the spectators sit." Then his Majesty, feeling the want of a pit nearer the palace, built the famous Royal Cockpit in Birdcage Walk, at the junction of Queen Square with Park Street at the top of Dartmouth Street, where all the chief matches were fought until the year 1816, when Christ's Hospital, the owners of the ground on which it stood, piously refused to renew the lease. The savour of the cockpit still lingers in the name Cockpit Steps in that neighbourhood. Driven thus from their classic haunt in Birdcage Walk, the disconsolate cockers subscribed among themselves, and built another theatre in Tufton Street, where their entertainments flourished until 1828. This building may still, or could a year or so ago, be inspected in the St. John's Institute of Tufton Street. The last resting-place of the cock-fighters in London was the "New Cockpit Royal," in Little Grosvenor Street, Westminster, and there it remained until destiny in the shape of 5 & 6 William IV. cap. 59 levelled the blow which knocked cock-fighting out of the sporting life of this country.

Such were the official quarters of the sport of cock-fighting in London for nearly two centuries, but there were many other public cockpits. The short list we have enumerated leaves out the establishment in Shoe Lane visited by Mr. Pepys. It omits also another place in Aldersgate Street devoted to the sport, which Samuel heard mentioned in a criminal case at the Sessions House. Another cockpit of the Restoration

was that "by the King's Gate in Holborn," where, in 1668, Pepys and Creed "went to the new cocke pit, and there saw the manner of it and the mixed rabble of the people." The present Drury Lane Theatre stands on the site of another house which, doubtless, derived its name of the Cockpit from an establishment for the accommodation of the cock-fighting gentry which occupied the site in yet earlier times. There were public cockpits in Jewin Lane, Bainbridge Street, Pickle Egg Walk, at New Vauxhall Gardens, at Old Gravel Lane near Blackfriars, and at St. George's in the East. These we know of from contemporary allusions; there were probably a score of others whose names have not survived. In any case, Londoners were reasonably provided with opportunities for the sport, of which, as we shall show, they availed themselves to the full.

Cock-fighting in England, in Tudor and Stuart times at least, was an affair mainly for country gentlemen; and the breeding and rearing of the different strains of cocks of the game, and their training and preparation for the pit, were among the solaces of the manor-house of those times. Roger Ascham wrote an essay on the sport; and Gervase Markham gave very particular directions about the "choyce, ordering, and dyeting of fighting-cocks for the battel," to use his own delightful words and spelling. But the public cock-fight of later times, such as Mr. Pepys describes, was usually a composite affair in which owners, or associations of owners,

matched their cocks in public with an eye to the gate-money paid by spectators, which formed a very useful addition to the stakes. The old news-sheets are full of the advertisements of these entertainments. Here is one, dated 11th of February 1700, and relating to a match at the Royal Cockpit, built some thirty years earlier by Charles the Second :—

“At the Royal Cockpit, on the South side of St. James’s Park, on Tuesday, the 11th of this instant February, will begin a very great cock match, and will continue all the week, wherein most of the considerablest cockers of England are concerned. There will be a battle down upon the pit every day precisely at 3 o’clock, in order to have done by daylight. Monday the 9th instant March will begin a great match of cock-fighting between the gentlemen of the city of Westminster and the gentlemen of the city of London, for six guineas a battle and one hundred guineas the odd battle, and the match continues all the week in Red Lion Fields.”

In the following April, too, there was an announcement of another match for a week, “at four guineas a battle and forty guineas the odd battle,” between the gentlemen of London and those of Warwickshire, at the “new cockpit behind Gray’s Inn Walks.” By the time Queen Anne was on the throne, indeed, the sport was one of the recognised public amusements of the town, much noticed by foreigners, and rather proudly regarded by the natives as a peculiarly British institution. Herr Von Uffenbach, already quoted, speaks of cock-fighting in 1710 as the “particular delight of the English, however barbarous it may appear to strangers;” while Mr. Thomas Sherlock,

an English gentleman, writing to a friend in Paris about the same time, implored him to come over to England, if only to see a cock-fight and a parliamentary election, "there is such a celestial spirit of anarchy in those two scenes," he says, "that words cannot paint."

Although the sport in England is now as dead as Queen Anne herself, there is very little difficulty in reviving its details and in forming a very definite idea of the attractions which drew crowds of its patrons to one or other of the cockpits we have mentioned. Besides old writers like Ascham and Markham, there were a whole set of professors and lovers of the "Royal Recreation and Art of Cocking," as they termed it, whose works initiate us into its deepest mysteries. We may learn from such treatises as that of Mr. William Machrie with that very title, which issued from Edinburgh in 1705, or the "Compleat Gamester" of Mr. Richard Seymour of thirty years later, enough to enable us to train cocks and arrange a main to-day, if haply the breed of cocks of the game still survive, and the police would leave us unmolested.

You chose a cock, for instance, as we learn from Mr. Seymour, "for shape, colour, courage, and sharp heel. First, for his shape, you must not choose him neither too large nor too small; wherefore the middle-sized cock is the proper choice for your purpose. His colour ought to be either grey, yellow, or red with a black breast. . . . You may tell his courage by

his proud, upright standing and stately tread in walking; and if he croweth very frequently in the pen, it is a courageous demonstration." Lastly, you may know the sharpness of his heel "when, upon every rising, he so hits that he extracts blood from his opponent, gilding his spurs continually, and every blow threatening immediate death to his adversary."

You may learn, as we say, from such books as these the infinite pains and care taken by the cockmasters to prepare their birds for the contest. There was never a moment, from the egg to the final gasp in the cockpit, that these brave birds were without the watchful care of their breeders and trainers. The sires and dams were selected with the greatest care—a care which sometimes included the robbery of a clutch of eggs from the roost of some famous strain of birds; for there was no false modesty in matters of this sort among amateurs in those days. "Fair water," a quiet neighbourhood, and a restricted harem were all conditions of the ideal *menage* which went to produce the best specimens of the cock of the game. "Walks at windmills, watermills, grange houses, lodges in parks and coney warrens," are consequently "very good walks," as we learn, "but that the latter is somewhat dangerous, being frequently haunted by polecats and other vermin."

As soon as the chickens were hatched, all signs were carefully watched which might determine the future character of the bird. Even if the young hen chickens showed any symptoms of a lack of

spirit, they were destined for the pot almost from the shell. For the cockerel, there were grave portents in such apparent trifles as the manner of his crowing, as it would seem. If he crowed before he was six months old, or his crowing was "loud, clear, or unseasonable," he exhibited "infallible signs of cowardice and falsehood," and he was thenceforth dedicated to the spit. "On the contrary, the true and perfect cock is long before he obtains his voice; and when he hath got it, observes his hours with the best judgment." They fed him with strange foods as he increased in stature, provided him with cooling medicines, and watched him through his first year or "staghood," until his second August came round, and he was fit at any time between that month and the following May to be prepared for the arena.

Before appearing in the pit, the cock of the game was put through a course of training which would be the making of a modern athlete. It took six weeks to bring him to his prime. For the first four days of that period he was fed "with the crumb of old manchet cut into square bits, at sun-rising, when the sun is in his meridian, and at sun-setting; and let his water be from the coldest spring you can get it." After four days' feeding on this fare he was set to spar with another cock. For a sparring match they covered "the cocks' heels with a pair of hots made of bombasted leather," that is, they improvised a sort of boxing-gloves for these interesting birds. In these they sparred until you saw them

“pant and grow weary.” You then took your cocks up, and gave them “a diaphoretic or sweating,” in which process, apparently, you buried them in a deep basket of straw, after a dose of sugar-candy, chopped rosemary, and fresh butter. Towards the evening you took them out of their “stoves,” and “licked their eyes and head with your tongue;” for what reason does not appear from Mr. Seymour’s treatise; but we may hope that both trainer and trained enjoyed the process.

Such were the opening days of the period of training of a cock of the game. His main diet afterwards consisted of a sort of biscuit, compounded of wheat and oat flour, ale, the white of egg, and butter. Upon this generous diet the cock was encouraged to take reasonable exercise by a device which, with his sparring, foreshadowed the later glories of the cockpit. His trainer took a dunghill cock into his arms, and showed it to the cock of the game, ran away, and by “permitting him to have now and then a blow,” enticed him to follow. If he continued this exercise “in a fair, green close” for about half-an-hour, the cock of the game would begin to pant, which was a sign for you to pick him up, carry him to his pen, and give him “herb of the grace, hyssop, rosemary, and butter.” Such a course of training—the run round the green close after the dunghill cock, alternating with sparring matches with his own kind at intervals of a day—consumed the first month; the last fortnight was a

time of less strenuous exercise for the cock. He was not allowed to spar for fear of leaving his head sore; but moderate chasings in the field were still recommended until the last four days of all before the battle, which were passed in dignified ease and seclusion. He was, at the end of those four days of rest, trimmed for the fight. All feathers on the crown of the head were snipped off close with scissors, his hackles or neck feathers were moderately shortened, his rump trimmed close, and his tail cut into the shape of a short fan by the shortening of the typical curved tail feathers of the cock. Lastly, his pinions were trimmed feather by feather, each quill being cut at a slant in order that in rising a lucky stroke might take out the eye of his adversary. Finally, his legs were furnished with the deadly "gaffles" or spurs. These, some two inches in length, and curved like a surgeon's needle, were either of steel or of a silver alloy, as the nature of the battle determined. For a contest for any small stake below five pounds, the steel spur was used. For battles for stakes of five pounds and upwards, the silver spurs were prescribed by the rules, that metal being reckoned less deadly, and the fight for the larger stake being thereby fittingly prolonged.

It will be gathered from these particulars of the breeding, rearing, and training of the gamecock that cock-fighting was no poor man's amusement, and that the only chance the poor man got of assisting was in the capacity of spectator. The rearing and training

of the cocks necessary to supply a main lasting a week at the Royal Cockpit, such as that which attracted "the most considerablest cockers in England" in 1700, was an expensive affair, when it is remembered that each bird was two years old and had been through all the details of rearing and training by a professional trainer or feeder such as we have described. The expert knowledge of the feeder was also very necessary for the proper handling of the birds in the pit itself, where the accidental infringement of one of the rules of the sport might give away the match from the best bird in England.

It was after such care and preparations as these in the case of the scores of individual cocks on each side which went to make up a grand match or "main," that the lovers of the sport forgathered for such a week's contest at Whitehall or Westminster or Gray's Inn Lane, according to the period in which the gathering took place. The company was headed either by the two wealthy patrons, each of whom provided a small regiment of devoted roosters, or by what we may term a small syndicate on each side, who united the produce of their several cock-walks for the grand encounter. The proceedings of a grand main of cocks were always preceded by a very important function, that of weighing and matching the combatants in pairs. A meeting for this purpose was arranged between the parties on a day which might precede that of the battle by a few days or weeks, as might be agreed, and its date was determined by such

consideration as the distances at which the parties lived from each other or from the place of battle in London. The date of the meeting for weighing was solemnly fixed in the articles of the match, a document drawn up in proper legal form, which regulated the stakes and other conditions of the encounter, and was properly executed under the hands of each of the parties. It was, however, an understood thing that the birds once matched could be dealt with in any way afterwards, and where a reasonable period was allowed to intervene between the day of weighing and that of the battle, there was much manœuvring between the parties, who strove to get the better of each other in point of weight and condition. If, as we say, the dates fixed by the articles allowed of such devices, a cock was trained very fine and light for the weighing, and was afterwards fed on a more generous scale with the hope of adding weight which might assist him against his adversary without diminishing his activity. The training of cocks, indeed, and their preparation for the pit was every bit as scientific and as carefully studied as the elaborate attentions bestowed upon the heroes of the prize-ring, like Mendoza, or Humphrys, or Jackson.

The favourite cocks for a match at the Royal Cockpit or other important meeting were those of a middle weight. The exact range of these weights was fixed by the articles, which always provided a maximum and minimum. These weights were usually between 3 lb. 8 oz. and 4 lb. 10 oz., as we learn from

a curious copy of such articles given at length in an old encyclopædia published when the "fancy" was at its zenith.¹ The competitors were allowed a single ounce of give and take, but it was quite usual, as we are told, for cocks to be matched at the weighing within a drachm of each other. If there were birds in either collection which exceeded the maximum weight, they were rejected from participation in the main, but might be matched privately against each other by their owners as each saw fit, and without reference to

¹ "Articles of Agreement made the . . . day of . . . Between . . . and . . . First, the said parties have agreed that each of them shall produce, show, and weigh at the . . . on the day of . . . beginning at the hour of . . . in the morning . . . cocks, none to be less than 3 lb. 8 oz. nor more than 4 lb. 10 oz., and as many of each party's cocks that come within one ounce of each other shall fight for £ . . . a battle, that is, £ . . . each cock in as equal divisions as the battles can be divided into six pits or days' play at the cockpit before mentioned. And the party's cocks that win the greatest number of battles matched out of the number before specified shall be entitled to the sum of £ . . . odd battle-money, and the sum to be staked in the hands of Mr. . . . before any cocks are pitted by the parties. And we further agree to produce, show, and weigh on the said weighing days . . . cocks for bye-battles subject to the same weights as the cocks that fight in the main, and these to be added to the number of cocks unmatched, and as many of them as come within an ounce of each other shall fight for £ . . . a battle, the number of cocks so matched to be as equally divided as will permit of, and added to each day's play with the main cocks. And it is also agreed that the balance of the battle-money shall be paid at the end of each day's play. It is also further agreed for the cocks to fight in silver spurs and with fair hackles, and to be subject to all the usual rules of cock-fighting as practised at the Cockpit Royal, Westminster, and the profits arising from the spectators to be equally divided between both parties after all charges are paid that usually happen on these occasions. Witness our hands this . . . day of . . . &c."—From *Ree's Encyclopædia*, 1819, Art. "Cock."

exact weights. Such cocks were called "shake-bags," a term of which it is difficult to guess the origin, unless it may have conveyed a suggestion of a remainder cock left in the bag after all the others had been matched. The term "main," too, suggests an engagement of less importance. This was the "bye-battle." The bye-battle was a sort of *divertissement* apart from the main, which was useful in filling up the hours of the meeting, and in providing opportunities for gaming for small operators, distinct from the great issues of the main. Bye-battles were arranged between favourite cocks under the rules and weights of the articles of agreement, and also between "shake-bags," upon such terms as commended themselves to their owners. Stakes laid upon bye-battles were not confused with those depending upon the battles of the main, and their results were, of course, not reckoned among the points of the great encounter.

The mains were of three orders or dimensions. The ordinary great meeting between cities or counties—the Gentlemen of London and the Gentlemen of Warwickshire, for example—was the Long Main. This, with its satellite bye-battles, aimed, as we have said, at providing continuous entertainment for a whole week, and we can understand that it was scarcely worth the while of the gentlemen of the provinces to make the long and expensive journey by coach or post of those days for an entertainment of less duration. The Long Main lasting a week, therefore, is what we must understand by a "main

of cocks" fought at any considerable theatre in the London of Anne and the first two Georges at least.

Wherever the elements of the great contest of the Long Main were wanting, the wealth of the great owners or syndicates, or their royal leisure, the Short Main had a great vogue. The Short Main was subject to the same laws and regulations as the Long Main, but it was confined to a couple of days at the outside, and was often arranged for a few hours of a single afternoon. The Short Main was consequently much affected by amateurs of a sane ambition only; it was upon the Short Main, too, that the whole cult of the cockpit declined in the degenerate days following the Act of 1835, when its votaries were hunted from county to county by the police.

The third dimension of mains was that astonishing arrangement known as the "Welch" variety. We are told that a Welch Main was "generally fought for a purse, a gold cup, a fat hog, or some other prize." But any of those treasures seems but a poor reward for the conqueror in the Welch Main. To arrange a Welch Main in orthodox form, you and your brother amateurs collected thirty-two fighting-cocks. These were arranged in sixteen pairs, and each couple fought to the death. The winners, or such as survived, were again matched in pairs, and the battle renewed. The eight winners of this second contest provided four pairs for the third; the survivors of the third contest made a couple of pairs for the penultimate combat; and the final issue of

the Welch Main lay between this pair of devoted fowl, from which the much-enduring winner of the whole contest emerged. From these particulars it will be seen that the brutalities of the sport were displayed in their most repulsive form in the Welch Main. Its opportunities for betting were no greater certainly than in the Long Main and its bye-battles; but it had great attractions for the choice spirits of the cockpit; and it was a matter of pride to the true connoisseurs of the sport that the Welch Main was practised nowhere outside of these fortunate islands.

There remains also to mention the Battle Royal, which was another variation of the sport of true British pedigree. "The Battle Royal consists in any number of fowls being put down together in the pit, and the last surviving fowl gains the prize." The Battle Royal must have been a mere saturnalia of bloodshed without any of the technical qualities which the connoisseur found in the Long and Short Mains. There could have been no betting, except perhaps in the mild form of a sweepstake, in such a pandemonium; but the spectacle of a score of cocks, fighting promiscuously together, was no doubt a very grateful spectacle for the true lovers of the fancy.

For all purpose of our inquiry, however, we may reject the Welch Main and the Battle Royal, and think only of the Long and Short Mains. The two owners of the competing cocks, or the representatives of the many individuals whose contributions of cocks

went to make up the numbers required to keep a Long Main going, sat on opposite sides of the pit, and were called "masters of the match." Inside the pit itself were two other officials, known as "feeders or setters-to." The duties of these last were very important, and a failure in them was likely to lead to the loss by their principals of the particular battle in which it occurred. They first of all put the two birds beak to beak, and subsequently each rendered to his own bird such aid as was permitted by the rules of the cockpit. This was limited strictly to releasing the birds from any entanglement of their spurs, either with each other, or in the matting which always covered the pit, to pushing a wounded bird upon its legs again, but by no means lifting him, and to replacing both combatants in the centre of the pit when the heat of the fray had driven them to its edges. There was another official known as the "Teller of the Law," whose duties will presently appear.

It was a rule of the main that the lightest cocks should be fought first in the match, the next heavy in turn, and so on in order of their several weights until the last pair of the main was reached. The official stakes were so much on each battle between each pair of cocks, and a further large sum on the "odd battle" or issue of the whole series. The first sum ranged from two to ten pounds in ordinary cases, the latter was often of very large amount. An ordinary main at the cockpit at Westminster would be for £10 the

battle and £500 the main, but famous meetings, both in London and the provinces, produced much larger stakes than these. There was a main fought at Lincoln, for instance, about the year 1820, in which £1000 was laid on each battle and £5000 on the main. The main in this case was a short one of seven battles only, but as one set of cocks carried off five events out of the seven, £8000 went to the fortunate owners in stakes alone, besides the bets, which were always a great feature of a cock-match. Mains of £100 the battle and £1000 the main were not uncommon, and it is beyond question that the "Royal Pastime" was in its time responsible for the shifting of a vast deal of personal property.

The main, as we say, began by the first pair of cocks being confronted by the setters-to, the birds being allowed to take a preliminary peck at each other while still in the feeder's hands. They immediately took the attitude of beak to beak which one sees in every poultry yard, and fenced for an opening. Enthusiasts have declared that there were all the intricacies of boxing in the real feinting and parrying which took place between two well-trained and experienced cocks. Then followed the real joining of battle, the "buckle to," as it was called. With two well-bred and well-matched cocks, as we learn from eye-witnesses of the latest of these encounters, there was little to be seen but a whirring mass of wings and feathers. There were sounds of blows with the gaffes, mere flipping apparently, which sometimes

made the feathers fly, but which meant wounds and death to the brave cocks of the game.

The determination shown by the finest cocks was astonishing. It is no exaggeration to say that the best cocks of the game would show fight as long as a spark of life remained in their devoted bodies. They might be maimed and even blinded, but when confronted by their enemy they would concentrate what little vitality was left to them in the menacing ruffling of their hackles and an expiring peck. This was so well understood that a blinded cock was never declared beaten until his beak was rubbed against that of his adversary. The old writers are eloquent about the valour of the gamecock. Listen to the Reverend Mr. George Wilson, who published a pamphlet in black letter entitled "Commendation of Cockes and Cocke-fighting" in 1607:—

"There was a cocke about Shrovetide last which in the cockepit in the citie of Norwich fought with a stronge and stout adversarie until such time as both his eyes were beaten out, his head sore wounded and shrewdly battered, and all his bodie most pitifully bruised, and then with a sudden astonishment of a sound blow which from his cruell adversarie he received, being beaten downe and lying for dead, not stirring any whit nor seeming otherwise (to the beholders) than to be starke dead, he suddenly started up contrary to all their expectations (when there was offered twenty shillings, yea twenty pounds, to be layd to one that there was no breath remayning in his bodye), and closed with his adversarie, at whom he stroke most violent blowes, and never gave over untill (to the amazement of the spectators) he had most valiantly slaine him."

"Oh strange action, oh stout heart, and undaunted

minde," continues the Reverend George, rising with his subject, and looking down with a fine scorn upon those who preferred hawking to cocking, "you that make so much account of a squeaking Castrell or a scurvie Hobbie as you do of a good hawk, you who think every dunghill craven to be as good as a cocke of the game, tell me (I say), did you ever see any of your base-bred cockes shewe such courage, or doe such an admirable action? Surely never!"

We return from this flight with Mr. Wilson to the sober prose of the pit, where it was not always that such phœnixes as he commemorates in the lofty diction we have quoted were to be found. The fowls, though seldom wanting in courage, were at times not wanting in discretion, and were accustomed to withdraw after a round or two to recover breath and look for an opening which should take the enemy at a disadvantage. This was an incident of the game, natural and even pretty in itself, which, however, was only allowed within limits. Too long an indulgence in this ogling process by the many roosters engaged in a six days' main had obvious inconveniences for a party of squires who had come up to Westminster from York, say, or Cheshire. So the aid of the Teller of the Law was called in upon such occasions. As soon as one or both of the cocks refused to confront each other, that functionary "told the law," that is, he counted twenty twice over in a clear and deliberate tone. At the end of this recital the birds were seized by the feeders and again placed beak to beak. If they

then fought it out and one was killed, everything went well and without further hitch. If, on the other hand, they again took to ogling each other, the Teller of the Law counted ten only, and they were again placed beak to beak. Sooner or later one of the poor brutes would show himself inferior in stamina or courage to the other, and fail to stand up against his adversary, when the law was again invoked. Twice twenty were told by the teller, then ten, ten times over, if the bird still refused to fight. At the end of each ten the words "once refused, twice refused," &c., were solemnly repeated, and if there was no response by the defaulter before the counting of the last ten the battle was delivered to his adversary. Such were the mysteries of the Long Law, as the process was called.

When a cock was obviously beaten the telling of the Long Law was apt to bore patrons of the sport who were anxious to set their stakes on a fresh battle. It was then open to any of these gentry to invoke the aid of the "Short Law" by a process which was known as "pounding the cock," that is, of laying the odds of forty to one in crowns against him. This was always done by throwing a hat or glove into the pit as a sign of offering the £10 to five shillings and the claiming of the Short Law. The Short Law was the counting of twice twenty only, and then repeating in a loud and distinct voice three times, "Will any one take it." If no one took the offer, the cock against which the odds were laid was declared beaten. There was, however,

always some risk in the process of pounding, because the most valiant of birds might be all the time dying of a wound, and by toppling over before the finish of the telling of the law, leave the victory to the apparently beaten bird. Then again, the odds being so tempting, the mere possessor of a crown might take your bet and trust to the chapter of accidents. This was often done; good judges of cock flesh could distinguish between want of breath and want of courage, and make a good investment by accepting the pounding. On such occasions the apparently moribund rooster, like the one in the leading case cited by the Reverend George Wilson, would often rise from his bier and present the ten pounds to the discerning sportsman who had shown confidence in him.

There was surely no lack of interest in a main of cocks, and as all bets were paid upon the conclusion of each battle, it is not surprising to learn, as Mr. Sherlock declared in writing to his friend in Paris, that there was a celestial spirit of anarchy about a cock match which was lacking in most other forms of entertainment except a general election. Defoe writing in his "Journey through England," in 1724, says: "Cock-fighting is the very model of the amphitheatre of the ancients. I was at several of these matches, and I never saw a cock run away. There is a continued noise among the spectators in laying wagers upon every blow each cock gives. I believe abundance of people get money by taking and laying the odds on each stroke, and find their account at the end of the battle, but these are

people that most nicely understand it. If an Italian or German saw the arrangement, and by any chance came into one of these cockpits, he would certainly conclude the assembly to be all mad by their continued outcries of 'six to four.'"

The excellent Mr. William Machrie, "Fencing Master in Edinburgh," was good enough to recite a code of rules for the cockpit, which he thought might be found "reasonable and just with respect both to wagerers and the cocks," and he began his code with the admirable sentiment, "All swearing and opprobrious language is to be punished." We are afraid that admirable rule was often broken by the patrons of the Royal Pastime. Mr. Pepys and Mr. Defoe, as we have seen, were both eloquent upon certain aspects of the company at a cock-fight, which suggest the possibility of much strong language; and they are strongly confirmed by most of the pictorial material which deals with cock-fighting from the days of Hogarth to those of Henry Alken. A consideration of some of the remaining rules of the code suggest a reasonable occasion for some difference of opinion, which may well have led to strong language, if nothing worse. Rule VIII. says: "All losses are to be paid presently after each battle, in good and current money." Nothing seems fairer, but the next rule provides much food for reflection, and hints at some possible confusion in the exciting surroundings of a cock-fight, which may well have led to profane swearing. "If any hath made a wager and cannot call to mind with

198 AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

whom he hath laid the same, and desire publicly that if the party with whom he laid the wager would give him the one half of the same, and the losing party do not confess the lay and give the one half upon his demand, it shall be lawful for any man to tell him with whom he hath laid, and the party to pay the whole because he did not confess it."

Was ever a rule better calculated to cause assault and battery than this? Then too, "He that takes up his cock or yields the battle when the cock is fighting, without consent of the bye wagerers, pays their loss." When one considers the effect of the execution of such edicts as these upon the class of audiences who flocked to the cockpits, he can well understand the shock Mr. Pepys' respectable feelings encountered in Shoe Lane.

We take Hogarth's famous plate of a cock match to be a representation of a very typical meeting of the patrons of the sport during the reign of George the Second. All classes of the community are represented; the blind man in the centre of the plate is a portrait of a notable gamester of those days, Lord Albemarle Bertie, a son of the Duke of Ancaster; there is another man of blood, evidently a portrait, on the right of the picture, with the star of a great order on his breast. At the other end of the social scale are the sweep taking snuff, and the mean blackguard who is filching the note from the blind Bertie, and several other of the figures round the table. The middle classes are represented by the man on the left sneezing at the snuff dropped by the superfine Frenchman, by the Quaker

who is offering up a prayer near the sweep, and by the deaf gentleman on the left with the ear-trumpet. The figure in the right-hand corner of the print, with the gallows chalked on his shoulder, may present a back view of Jack Ketch himself, or the emblem may be taken as humorously prophetic of the wearer's latter end. There are six separate individuals who are attempting dealings with his lordship at one and the same time, a state of things we imagine to be quite typical of the process of getting a stake laid at a cock match; and the two jockeys in the foreground, who touch the handles of their whips, display the orthodox method of saying "Done" to a bargain among the gentlemen of the pigskin of those days. You may see, too, a foot of each of the setters-to on either side of the table. There is a shadow across the arena which speaks with much eloquence to the initiated. Part of it may be construed into a figure of a man holding out what may be recognised as the shadow of a watch and seals. It was the pleasant custom of the cockpit of the reign of George the Second to make an example of those who incurred liabilities which they could not discharge "in good and current money," by hoisting them up to the roof of the amphitheatre in a basket, which was kept handy for the purpose, and properly furnished with a rope and pulley. The victim of the shadow in Hogarth's print is offering his watch and seals to escape from his position of ignominy. We think this wonderful plate may be placed by the side of

Mr. Pepys' vivid description of his visit to Shoe Lane as one of the best presentments of the humours of the cockpit existing.

The same "celestial spirit of anarchy" animates the other classic representation of a cock match—that of the Royal Cockpit at Westminster, by Thomas Rowlandson, which appeared in the *Microcosm* of London some sixty years later. The excellent plates of that collection throw an amazing light upon the London of that day and its manners, with very little help, indeed, from the appallingly bald and padded prose which accompanies them. There is here the same mixture of dresses, the same clamorous betting, and the same rowdyism—"a collection of peers, pick-pockets, grooms, gentlemen, *bon vivants*, and bullies," as the scribe of the *Microcosm* puts it alliteratively but unconvincingly, are mixed up and cursing at each other, threatening each other with horsewhips, and punching each other on the head. There can be no doubt, we believe, about the general character of the companies which met to take their pleasure at the cockpit all over the town and country, if this state of things prevailed at the headquarters of the sport. Dramatic stories of the savagery of cockers as a class may still be read in the columns of the periodical literature of the days in which the institution flourished. A man who was losing called down imprecations from heaven upon himself and his bird. If the bird was killed, might he die also, he shouted, and the awe-struck contributor to the *Gentleman's*

Magazine records how the bird was killed, and how they carried out the impious gamester stark dead a moment later.

It may be that the roughness of the company at the ordinary cock match induced some of the more reputable votaries of the sport to take greater pains for the concealment of their identity than was usual in some others. It is quite certain that generous as the amount of information as to the details of cock-fighting which has come down to us from earlier generations, there has survived very little record of the *personnel* of the sport. The famous cock-masters of the Annes and Georges are unknown; such celebrities as King Henry the Eighth, King James the First, and Mr. Alexander Pope, are all vaguely mentioned as patrons of the cockpit; but who the men were who supported its traditions during the greater part of the last century it is now hard to say. We do not think it was ever in great favour among the fashionable men of St. James's; one reads nothing of it in Walpole or the Selwyn letters; there is only a single reference to cock-fighting in a whole century of wagers recorded in the betting-book at White's. In the latter half of the century a main of cocks was a regular attraction at all the well-known race meetings, and the results are all solemnly entered in the *Sporting Calendar* for each year: how the gentlemen of Northumberland met those of Durham in 1775, and fought a main, which ended in a draw; or how Cambridge beat Lincoln at Newmarket in the follow-

ing year. The sport was accepted so seriously, that Mr. Hoyle, who wrote his famous treatise on Whist about the middle of the century, took the trouble to calculate the odds with the utmost nicety, as when he gravely quoted the betting as $1 \frac{3843421}{7821875}$ to 1 against a certain contingency.

But we imagine, as we have said, that very notable people kept out of the cockpit in London, except on rare occasions, until well on in the present century; and that the gentlemen of London or Westminster, who advertised their matches in the papers, were not very representative of their order. An account which Mr. Grantley Berkeley gives of a visit to the Royal Cockpit at Westminster, where he saw the Duke of Norfolk, very early in the present century, suggests that his Grace, who was not at all particular in his company as a rule, was not a regular frequenter of that institution. It suggests also some reason for the absence of gentlemen from such entertainments. Berkeley remembered the duke "in a blue silk coat and lace ruffles, with which he was accustomed to wipe out the pan of his gun when out shooting." Said the duke to a friend, "Well, I don't understand why they should offer those odds; if I betted, I should say two to one on the yellow." "Done with you," said a coster, who had overheard his Grace's remark, "I'll take it;" and he gave the duke a slap on the shoulder by way of concluding the bargain. The real vogue of the sport as an amusement of gentlemen came a little later, when the men of fashion

became less superfine in bearing, and took a larger interest in sports of the field.

To return to such names as are recorded as the patrons of the sport, the first of the famous cockers seems to have been Colonel Mordaunt, who took his cocks to the East to match them against those of the potentates of Hindostan. The plate by Earlom, after the painting by Zoffany, depicting the battle between the colonel's birds and those of the King of Oude, in Lucknow, in 1786, is much admired by collectors of sporting prints, and sometimes changes hands at Sotheby's at comfortable prices. The colonel found the strains of cocks in India superior to his own, and on the whole met with very indifferent success. Another great light of the cockpit was Dr. Bellyse, of Anslem, who died in 1829. He bred from seven to eight hundred chickens yearly, mostly of the "White Pile" or "Cheshire Pile" varieties, and was one of the great supporters of the annual meetings at Chester, which were very famous. The sport had the distinguished support of the Earl of Derby of the first quarter of the present century, who protected and fostered the famous breed of the "Knowsleys, the cocks black-breasted, with red hackles, the hens partridge-coloured, and the legs of both white." Black-breasted Birchins, Duns, Piles, Cuckoos, Blotch-breasted Reds were other strains much prized by the knowing ones. The Earl of Sefton, the coaching earl of the Dighton Prints, and of the Reform Bill, was another great patron of the cock-fighting cult,

and the families of Warburton, Wilbrahams, Egertons, and Cholmondeleys were all well known as eminent members of the fraternity, as were also Lord Mexborough, the Cottons and the Meynells, Admiral Rous, Lord Chesterfield, and General Peel.

There were also breeders and trainers of great renown in extensive business during the first thirty years of the present century, who were often looked up to by their clients much as are the great magnates of the training establishments for racehorses of to-day. Gilliver, a Staffordshire man, and Potter, who looked after Lord Derby's cocks, were famous names; Porter and Gunn were renowned in the art of setting-to and conducting the manipulations of the pit, and the appropriately-named Charles Faultless was unequalled in the nice operation of heeling the birds, that is, of attaching with waxed thread to the best advantage the murderous gaffles or spurs.

We have drawn almost all our information on the sport of cock-fighting from the writings of those who were its enthusiastic supporters, and have not concerned ourselves so far with the arguments or speculations of those who were opposed to its barbarities. There was, however, a continuous outcry against the sport, on the score of its cruelty, from very early times. The periodicals of the last century were not long together without some contribution which bewailed this aspect of the diversion, and its opponents often took strange ways of expressing their hostility in the public papers. Thus, in the *Gloucester Journal*

for 1756, some enemy thus addressed the local "fancy" by advertisement:—

"This is to give notice to all lovers of cruelty and promoters of misery, that at the George Inn, on Wednesday, in the Whitsun week, will be provided for their diversion the savage sport of cock-fighting, which cannot but give delight to every breast divested of humanity, and for music, oaths and curses will not fail to resound round the pit, so that this pastime must be greatly approved by such as have no reverence for the Deity nor benevolence for His creatures."

Mr. Pegge, too, of a quarter of a century later, whom we quoted at the beginning of our inquiry, was as convinced of the brutality of the sport as he was of its antiquity, and was only one of a body of moralists who inveighed against its practice for nearly a century, an expression of public opinion which at last resulted in the Act of 1835. This Act repealed another of three years earlier, which had suppressed the sport within five miles of Temple Bar, and in a set of merciful clauses dealing with the sufferings of animals generally, extinguished cock-fighting throughout the country.

But in spite of this legislation cock-fighting did not expire without a struggle. There was a great battle at Elmore Farm, near London, presided over by the Earl of Sefton, so late as 1850, and to evade the police and bring a short main in a barn, or even in a drawing-room, to a successful conclusion was a favourite diversion with the sporting youth of this country until quite recent times. There is an account of such a meeting, which is naïvely humorous, in those

interesting but rambling memoirs of the Honourable Grantley Berkeley, showing how the Count de Salis, a magistrate, lent his premises near Cranford to Berkeley and his friends for the purpose, gave him the keys of the whole place, and then called in the police and hauled Berkeley before the Bench at Uxbridge. There was much fun excited by the non-appearance of the count, "the cock who would not fight," and Berkeley was fined five pounds. It is whispered that in even quite modern days a short main was a favourite diversion at two great English country houses at least, and later still a party of country gentlemen, including several magistrates, were within an ace of being caught by the police in the very act of cocking. That was about twenty-five years ago, but we hear little of such rumours to-day, and cock-fighting as a sport may be said to be extinct. We have fallen on evil days, and our sportsmen now watch football and cricket matches instead of sitting to see as many as a thousand cocks of the game slaughtered in a single week, as happened at a famous meeting at Newcastle one hundred and twenty years ago.

CHAPTER VI

THE PLAY AND THE OPERA

OLD Fynes Moryson, sketching in his sententious manner the characters of the nationalities he encountered in his famous itinerary, opined that "to pass over grieffe the Italians sleepe, the Germans drinke, the Spaniards lament, the Irish howl, and the English go to playes." Moryson wrote of an age when the greatest of all playwrights was alive, and the English displayed a taste for the drama which took crowds of citizens to the Globe, to the primitive houses of Blackfriars, to the Fortune in Cripplegate, the Curtain in Shoreditch, and to half the inn yards in London. It is with that habit of haunting the playhouse, noticed so quaintly by the old writer, which the English have never since discarded, that we are concerned here. We wish to follow the audiences of former days into the playhouses which were from time to time opened for their patronage, and to take note of the humours of the different classes of playgoers in the different seats provided for their accommodation; from the King and Court in the Royal box to the humblest of his Majesty's subjects dropping orange peel or nutshells from the gallery into the pit. It is, as we

say, with that aspect of the theatre, of the good people of all conditions taking their diversion at the play, rather than with the actors and the lines they recited at the footlights, that we are concerned in this chapter, the last, indeed, a subject which has already provided material for the able writers of many volumes.

For all purposes of our inquiry, we date the modern theatre from the days of the Restoration of his Majesty King Charles the Second. It was only in that happy reign that the persecution of the stage and of the players at length became ineffective. The puritanical opposition to everything connected with the drama, which began perhaps with Archbishop Grindal, and Gosson, the redoubtable parson of St. Botolph's, in the reign of Elizabeth, and developed into the suppressions of the Commonwealth, was now exchanged for the patronage and protection of those in high places. There has perhaps never been so good a friend to the actor and to the theatrical interest generally as his Majesty King Charles. The king, by granting a patent to Mr. Tom Killigrew at the Cockpit in Drury Lane, established that principle of monopoly in things dramatic which lasted till well on in the present reign. The actors of Drury Lane were the king's servants and a part of the royal household under the administration of the Lord Chamberlain; a certain number of them indeed wore his Majesty's uniform of red cloth and silver lace, and ranked as Gentlemen of the Chamber. The king's brother, the Duke of York, had his own

INTERIOR OF SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE



company at the Lincoln's Inn Theatre in Portugal Street, or at Sir Christopher Wren's house in Dorset Gardens under Davenant, with privileges scarcely less valuable, including a patent to which theatrical historians will trace back all the subsequent glories of the great house in Covent Garden. It was under his Majesty's auspices that women's parts were first played by women, and he was good enough, as we know, to honour the profession by forming very intimate alliances with some of those ladies. Lastly, there has never been a more assiduous playgoer than his Majesty King Charles himself.

We date our inquiries into the aspect of the theatres from the reign of King Charles, for another very sufficient reason. It was only when the invaluable diarists of that reign began to record their observations of the life of their times, that we get anything like a complete account of the interiors of the playhouses. It was Pepys and Evelyn who first enabled us to people the boxes and the pit with real figures, and performed for the seventeenth century what a host of contemporary writers have done for the theatrical matters of subsequent times. It is with the help of these diarists and the comments of the critical papers which came a little later, of the letter writers and memoir writers and essayists of a century and a half, that we seek to revive the aspect of the playhouse of former times, to consider the audiences which flocked to them, and to determine, it may be, from the attitude of those audiences, the place which the theatre has held

210 AMUSEMENTS OF OLD LONDON

among the amusements of succeeding generations of Londoners.

In turning our thoughts to the playhouses of the Restoration, it is important to forget a great part of the vast modern organisation of the stage, and, at first, to think only of a couple of small theatres occupied by the patent companies we have mentioned. These two companies, the King's and the Duke's, fortified by the patents accorded to Killigrew and Davenant, enjoyed what was practically a monopoly of purveying theatrical amusements to the town. The King's company occupied a building which arose on the site of the old cockpit in Drury Lane in the year 1663, and is the parent of the present building on the same site. The Duke's company filled a theatre extemporised by Davenant, in 1660, from a tennis-court in Portugal Street, on a site since absorbed by the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons. There were subsequent changes; the Duke's company, when Davenant died in 1671, and his lady with Betterton and Harris took over the management, went to a theatre built by Wren in Dorset Gardens, now Dorset Street and Salisbury Square, off Fleet Street. Dorset Gardens Theatre was a house of some architectural pretensions, with frontage on the Thames and an entrance for the convenience of audiences who came by water. So also, when the inevitable fire burnt out the King's company at Drury Lane in 1673, they occupied the vacated house in Portugal Street during the rebuilding of their own. Finally, the

THE PLAY AND THE OPERA 211

King's and Duke's companies finding competition unprofitable, united their forces at Drury Lane in 1684, issued adventurers' shares and so established the venerable tradition of the renters at the patent theatre of old Drury. There were subsequent changes in which the relations between the two companies, or of certain of their members, were restored to their old conditions of competition at the two theatres. We shall find, therefore, that the interest of the play and its audiences whose amusement we seek to recall, are confined for a long period to a relatively small area.

It is quite easy, in thinking of theatrical entertainment in the light of our modern experience, to ignore many of the attractions which took people to the playhouse in those earlier days. The theatre of the Restoration was in reality much more of a social resort than the play or the opera as we know them. The pit of the playhouse of the Restoration was a social exchange, where the young man of condition displayed his graces and exchanged pleasantries with his fellows; where the man of wit discharged his carefully-prepared impromptus; and where the actors and actresses, not actually engaged on the stage, were accustomed to keep themselves in evidence by mixing freely and ostentatiously with the audience. The stage-door and the green-room, too, were attractions for a large class of men whose attentions to the actresses became a source of embarrassment to the management, but which was a remarkable feature of the theatrical life of the period upon which we have

very definite opinions of the managers themselves—Colley Cibber and the rest. Finally, the patronage which Charles the Second gave to both the theatres of his time, and the nature of his relations with some of his subjects who appeared with him in the royal box, gave an interest to a visit to the play of those days which is lacking in later and more sedate times.

There is scarcely any phase of the social life of modern England which has received more minute attention than that dealing with things theatrical; and it is not difficult to revive the features of the two London playhouses of the Restoration from the labours of the historians of the stage. As a fact, the theatre of those days differed little in essentials from the theatre of to-day. The stalls of the fashionable houses of the West End have usurped the greater part of the old pit; in other respects, those houses remain much as were their prototypes at Drury Lane, or Lincoln's Inn, or Dorset Gardens, when King Charles, in the box, nodded to Mr. Pepys by the side of a pretty woman in the pit. The first tier, instead of being partly open as to-day, was composed of boxes continuously; the second tier contained many open seats and a few boxes; the upper tier was the shilling gallery as now, but without the refinement of the first rows, railed off to make an "amphitheatre" at an increased charge.

The stage ran out a distance of several feet beyond the proscenium into the body of the theatre, and was thus exposed on three of its sides to the spectators

THE PLAY AND THE OPERA 213

who occupied the pit. The curtain, instead of rolling down as at present, worked in two halves on a rod thrown across the stage, behind the proscenium; and a great deal of the action of the play took place on this front portion of the stage which projected well into the house itself, to the great advantage both of actor and audience, as Mr. Colley Cibber, who lived to see this feature of the house altered, declared. It was at the front of this space, too, that those very epigrammatic prologues and epilogues of the period were spoken. Nelly Gwynn, say, as the distressful Valeria, would die to slow music; two walking gentlemen would advance to take away the corpse, Nell would break out with that surprising couplet—

“Hold, are you mad, you damned confounded dog,
I am to rise, and speak the epilogue,”

trip to the front, and deliver Mr. Dryden's broad verses with a roguishness which in no way diminished their pronounced flavour. The other feature of the stage of the Restoration which distinguished it from that of to-day, was the mode of entrance for the actors. It was rarely, indeed, that the chief characters of a play came upon the stage from the wings. It was the curious custom of those days for Betterton or Kynaston, Mrs. Barry or Mrs. Bracegirdle, to enter and leave the stage through one of four doors, which were pierced through the proscenium, two on each side of the curtain, just where the stage-boxes

came later, and gave access to the stage for the chief actors of the piece. We have to think, then, of the great part of the acting proceeding more amongst the audience than at present; the scenery and supers being more distinctly in the background, and the position in which the chief characters performed enabling them to make the most of the finest shades of play, both of voice and feature. Remove the modern footlights, and replace them by the light of moulded candles, hung from the flies and the proscenium, and you have the main outlines of the theatre of the Restoration.

The prices of the different parts of the house divided the audiences of those days into different social strata much as now, the main difference being between the pit of that day and this. The pit of the Restoration, though open at the same charge of half-a-crown, approximated more closely to the stalls of our own time in the rank of some of its patrons. A shilling took the apprentice to the gallery; a seat in a box on the second tier could be had for eighteen-pence; and in one of the lower boxes, in the best position on the first tier, for no more than four shillings. You could sit in the king's own box itself for that figure, if his Majesty were not present. Boxes were not let as units, as at present; and unless you took all the seats for yourselves and friends, you were always liable to have strangers sitting next to you; that, however, was an attraction in itself for the average playgoers of Charles the Second, when it

went hard but his neighbour was some sprightly young woman in a vizard.

The actors and managers of those days, as of later, had different degrees of consideration for the different classes of their customers. Dryden's prologues and epilogues are full of complaisance for the "propitious angels" of the boxes, of derision and defiance for the occupants of the pit, the "nest of devils" with its free list of all the dramatic authors who had ever tempted fate and the managers with a manuscript of a play or a prologue ; its citizens who looked to have their money's worth ; and its smaller but dangerous band of beaux and men of quality, whose report of a play made or damned its success. "The Gods" were little considered by Killigrew and his successors ; the gallery, indeed, came to be the perquisite of the footmen of the people of quality who came early to keep their masters' places in the better portions of the house, a privilege which led to much trouble at a later period. Another curious feature of the management of the patent theatres of the early years of the reign of Charles the Second which points to its importance as a place of public meeting, was that regulation which allowed any one to walk into a playhouse without payment so long as he retired before the end of the act which was being played when he entered. It was thus common to see strangers walk into the pit, look round the house for a friend, and not finding him, go out without payment. The custom, however, led to such abuse, that the Lord Chamber-

lain abolished it after it had been in force some ten years or less.

There has probably never appeared in any age or language so minute account of the aspect of the theatre of a particular period as that contained in those entries of Mr. Samuel Pepys in that astonishing diary of the events of London between the years 1660 and 1670. We have little to do with Mr. Pepys' opinion of the acting or the plays. It may be that the "Midsummer Night's Dream," as he saw it presented, was "the most insipid, ridiculous play" that ever he saw in his life; that "Othello" was "a mean thing," and that the "Tempest" had "no great wit"; that "Sir Martin Marall" was the greatest of all comedies, and that Thomas Betterton (as is quite likely) the greatest of all actors. Upon some or, indeed, all of these points Mr. Pepys' judgment may have been lacking, but no one has ever impeached his powers of observation, and it is certain that those who trouble to follow that quaint sinner in his pleasures may with little call on their imagination fancy themselves in the King's Playhouse at Drury Lane, the Duke's at Dorset Garden or Lincoln's Inn, or the Cockpit within the precincts of the court at Whitehall. There was little that escaped Samuel in any part of the house—he had an eye for the king sitting in the midst of a galaxy of beauty in the boxes; for the citizens in the pit as well as for the actors on the stage; and he knew as much about the toilette of Nell Gwynn as King Charles himself.

THE PLAY AND THE OPERA 217

Among all the pleasures of the theatre of those days, one of the choicest for Samuel and for the ordinary citizen was certainly that of sharing the diversions of the place with his Majesty; there were all sorts of interesting details of life at court to be gathered by the plain man for the modest expenditure of half-a-crown for his seat in the pit. The waxing and waning of the beauty and influence of one lady of singed reputation; the appearance of another; the insolence of the newcomer at the height of her fortune; the boredom of the easy-going king at the familiarity of Palmer or Moll Davis; the indignation of the poor queen from Portugal at her surroundings, and many other particulars of the same sort were visible from time to time at Drury Lane or Dorset Gardens or the Cockpit at Whitehall, and insured a good return for his money for the ordinary playgoer.

Pepys could "never enough admire" the beauty of Madam Palmer, he "filled his eyes with her," "gazed upon her with much pleasure," felt troubled "to see her look dejectedly and slighted by people," protested that her beauty was in no way injured "by her late sickness." He saw Palmer almost on her first appearance ("with whom the king do discover a great deal of familiarity"); he noted her melancholy lack of smiles when Moll Davis was supposed to be in the ascendant, and he had a very shrewd foreboding of the effect of that ascendancy when it was a patent fact. Was there ever a more suggestive commentary on that curious royal menage at Whitehall than that account of Mr.

Pepys of the aspect of the Duke's Playhouse in the afternoon of December the 21st, 1668? The Castle-mayne had kept her footing for six years at least, but felt it slipping at last. "It vexed me to see Moll Davis in the box over the king's, and my Lady Castle-mayne's head look down upon the king, and he up to her," says Mr. Pepys, "and so did my Lady Castle-mayne once, to see who it was, but when she saw her she looked like fire, which troubled me." To use one of Samuel's own expressions, her ladyship's "nose was out of joynt" at Moll's exulting demeanour, so like her own, four years earlier, when she frisked into the king's box, seated herself at his Majesty's right hand, between his Majesty and the Duke of York, and "put the king himself as well as everybody else out of countenance." The Duke of York was more decorous in public, as a rule, than his Majesty, but the playgoer of 1663 could gaze upon his royal highness and his duchess at Whitehall "kissing and leaning upon one another," which Mr. Pepys considered "impertinent and unnatural dalliance," and the humours of the royal boxes at the play are surely very plain in his pages.

We can learn quite as much from him about other parts of the house. Samuel began his theatrical pleasures in the shilling gallery, as he was careful to record when he saw from the box of his more prosperous years, rather censoriously, the "abundance of 'prentices and mean people in the pit." ("So much the vanity of the age is to be observed in this parti-

cular," says Samuel on the occasion of his sixth visit to Sir Martin Marall.) His experience in every tier of the playhouses of his time makes him an authority on the amenities of all. In the pit he sat by the wits, was very careful to listen to Sedley's criticism of another author's piece, to note Etheredge's curses of the actors who were spoiling his own play, to listen to Buckingham and Buckhurst and the beaux, whose report on the morrow was to make or mar the fortunes of the comedy just presented for the first time. There were no newspapers in those days, with columns open to the professional critic, to advertise the success or the ruin of the hopes of the dramatic author. The production of the play was only communicated to the public by a few broad sheets stuck on a post in the town, and by its announcement from the stage at the end of the previous performance. The pit then paid its double price for a new piece, the wits flocked to their corner near the stage, and their report after the informal discussion at the end of the play, either in the pit or in the actresses' dressing-rooms, decided the fate of the piece.

It was a red-letter day for the playgoers of all ages when women first came on the stage, and took the place of those wonderful men actors, Kynaston and the rest, whose presentment of female characters must have been wonderfully efficient, if we may judge from the enthusiastic reports which their performances inspired. Pepys first saw women on the stage in 1661; it is said by historians of the drama that Mrs. Coleman,

who appeared at Rutland House five years earlier, was the first professional female actress. Many stories are told to account for this momentous change in the economy of the theatre. King Charles was kept waiting, it is said, and inquired the cause. "The queen is not yet shaved, your Majesty," was the reply, and its humour struck King Charles, we may be sure. No doubt the addition of a bevy of roguish actresses to the companies at the playhouses was as great an attraction to the king as it was to Mr. Pepys. Anyway, Killigrew and Davenant were both empowered to recruit their forces among the ladies, and we date one of the chief attractions of the stage from that happy reign.

There was much amusing incident among the audiences of those days, and we imagine that what the modern theatre had gained in decorum it has lost in interest. In place of the ice brought in during the intervals of the modern piece, oranges at sixpence each were purveyed by women of decided manners. Pepys is constantly recording money spent upon these delicacies for his womenkind at the play, "it costing me 8s. upon them in oranges," was a rueful entry in the diary. He had an unfortunate transaction, too, with one of these fruit merchants, when he had been round to see Mr. Harris behind the scenes, and "on returning the orange woman did come in the pit and challenge me for 12 oranges which she delivered to my order at a late play at night to give to some ladies in a box, which was wholly untrue." Samuel, however, paid up like a sensible man.

We gather that the pit seats consisted of mere rows of benches without backs, as in some theatres of to-day. "I was sitting behind in a dark place," says Mr. Pepys in a passage which gives vivid detail of the life of that time, "and a lady spit backward upon me by mistake, not seeing me, but after seeing her to be a very pretty lady I was not troubled at it at all." Pepys had ever a soft heart for a pretty face. He revelled in hearing a woman drown the voices of the actors by her laughter so long as she was comely, but was less tolerant of less fashionable neighbours. "Not so well pleased with the company at the house to-day," he records, "which was full of citizens;" "the house full of citizens, and so the less pleasant," is another entry. "Here a mighty crowd of citizens, 'prentices, and others, and it makes me observe that when first I began to bestow a play on myself, I do not remember that I saw so many by half of the ordinary 'prentices and mean people in the pit at 2s. 6d. apiece as now." It is quite easy to trace the growing popularity of the playhouse and Samuel's own growing importance in his pleasant pages.

But more often than not he was surrounded by the company he loved. He was delighted to sacrifice all his interest in the piece for the pleasure of the conversation of well-known people of fashion, even if only overheard. He was often by the side of Sedley, and drank in with delight the dramatic criticisms of that roystering spirit; "and he did at every line take notice of the dulness of the poet and

badness of the action, and that most pertinently, which I was mightily taken with." We may hear, if we choose, Sir Charles's opinions on morals, as well as the dramatic unities, in his remarks recorded by Mr. Pepys, and wonder at the complaisance of the pit which preferred the witty reprobate's dissertations to the play they presumably went to hear. Pepys, assisted at another of Sir Charles's afternoons at the playhouse, and his account recalls the interesting custom, then prevalent among ladies of fashion, of appearing at the theatre in the vizard. The mask, which had been the usual wear of ladies out of doors in the reign of Elizabeth, was revived, after the Restoration, at the play. It was said that there was an excellent reason for the custom. The plays of Dryden or Mrs. Behn, or Sedley himself, were of a flavour, both in incident and language, that made it inadvisable for a modest woman to listen to them for the first time with a bare face. Whenever, therefore, a new piece was announced, which was at frequent intervals in those days, half the ladies in the house appeared in the black vizard, in order to take a taste of its quality without exposing their blushes. Pepys himself records the appearance of Lord Falconbridge "and his lady, my Lady Mary Crowwell, in the Duke's house in 1663;" "and when the house began to fill, she put on her vizard, and so kept it on all the play, which is of late become a great fashion among the ladies, which hides their whole face." The fashion spread down-

wards, and, it is to be feared, was used to cover frolics which were certainly not inspired by modesty; the mask, indeed, soon became the ensign of a lady of a defined position in society.

But here was Sedley to give Mr. Pepys an opportunity of preserving for our benefit a perfect reflection of one phase of life in the pit. "And one of the ladies," says Mr. Pepys, "would and did sit with her mask on all the play, and, being exceeding witty as ever I heard woman, did talk most pleasantly with him (Sedley), but was, I believe, a virtuous woman and of quality. He would fain know who she was, but she would not tell, yet she did give him many pleasant hints of her knowledge of him, and did give him leave to use all means to find out who she was; but pulling off her mask. . . . A more pleasant rencontre I never heard, and by that means lost the pleasure of the play wholly, to which, now and then, Sir Charles Sedley's exceptions against both words and pronouncings were very pretty."

There are other pictures of the playhouse within those pages which have surely never been surpassed. There is the house full of "parliament men, it being their holiday." A "gentleman of good habit" bought oranges from one of the women in the pit, was careless in his eating, "and did drop down as dead, being choked." Up runs "Orange Moll, and, with much ado, did thrust her fingers down his throat, and brought him to life again." We see the pit scattered by the summer "storm of hayle," which

drove through the cupola of the auditorium. Hart is on the boards with a child in his arms, whose mother is in the pit; the child cries, the mother "by force" jumps upon the stage, and takes her child away from the actor, and it pleases Mr. Pepys "mightily to see the natural affection of the poor woman." Lady Carnegie appears in a box "most devilishly painted"; Nell Gwynn in another has come over from the Duke's theatre to see the play at Drury Lane, "the jade Nell," as Mr. Pepys calls her affectionately, the "bold merry slut who lay laughing there upon people." Mr. Beeston comes forward to announce that a poor play, just acted to a half empty house, will be repeated on the morrow; the actor himself cannot keep his countenance, and the pit breaks into a roar of derision. We see Mr. Beeston on another day reading Mr. Kynaston's part, that gentleman having been "exceedingly beaten with sticks by two or three that assaulted him;" and we get an idea of how Sir Charles Sedley repaid a jeer of the actor, or, as some say, a mere personal resemblance heightened by a similarity of dress. Sometimes, indeed, you might see a fracas on the stage itself. In 1682, Mr. Charles Dering and Mr. Vaughan had some little difference in the pit, drew, and finding little room for their sword arms, rushed up over the astonished fiddlers of the orchestra, and fought at the front of the stage, "to the greater comfort of the audience," as Dr. Doran quaintly observes. It was a real fight, surely worth the half-

crown admission, for Mr. Dering got a thrust in the short ribs, and was carried out, bleeding, by the players; and Mr. Vaughan was marched off to Bridewell to await the issue of the encounter.

There are a score of these glimpses of the playhouse and its actors, and audiences and their humours, to be gathered from Mr. Pepys' masterpiece, now for the first time made accessible by Mr. Wheatley's splendid edition with its wondrous index. And the most interesting of them all is the portrait of that typical playgoer, Samuel himself, with his very soul laid bare for our inspection. He knows his weakness for the play, he enters solemn vows of abstinence with forfeits of a crown for the breach, and he records his falls more often than his resistance. "Hence much against my nature and will, yet such is the power of the devil over me, that I could not refuse it, to the theatre and saw 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' ill done." Quite early in 1661 he is "troubled to be seen by four of our office clerks which sat in the half-crown box, and I in the one and sixpence." He has a most engaging tone of superiority in reporting a remark of "an ordinary lady" in the pit who saw Lady Castlemaine for the first time "that she was well enough." He is in continual ecstasy about the beauty of one or the other of those ladies of the Court, most constant, however, to the Castlemaine, but appreciative of the Stewart, "with her little Roman nose," or "pretty witty Nell," or Mrs. Middleton "with a very excellent face, and body I think." If neither Hart nor

Nell nor Knipp were there the play, however good, would not please him. With Knipp present he would enjoy the worst of pieces even by the side of Mrs. Pepys. "But it is pretty to observe," he says, "how I did look up and down and did spy Knipp, but durst not own it to my wife, who do not like my kindness to her." Little wonder, indeed, for Mrs. Pepys surely had much to put up with. Samuel was decorum itself by her side, but when she was away he would find himself sitting in front of Knipp and Pierce, "who pulled me by the hair, so I addressed myself to them." Knipp sang a song up in the flies at the King's House which pleased Samuel mightily, "where Knipp, after her song in the clouds, came to me in the pit." Finally, the shameless rogue had the conscience to put on record his feelings at the performance of the "Virgin Martyr," where "the wind musique when the angel comes down is so sweet that it ravished me, so that it made me really sick, as I have formerly been when in love with my wife."

Mr. Colley Cibber mentions a real difficulty of those early managers when he remarks that access to the stage "was given as a bait to the unlicked cubs of the nobility." One of the greatest of the attractions of the playhouse for the audiences of the Restoration was the power of access to the mysteries behind the curtain. But the lounging men of fashion of that day were at the best a sad hindrance to the progress of the piece, ogling the actresses and elbowing the actors at the wings. As Cibber said in his alliterative style, "the

decencies of a drawing-room were exchanged for the license of a lobby." It was his claim that, at the risk of their lives, he and his colleagues had reversed the order of things by refusing all entrance money at the stage door, and "preserving to ourselves the right of chusing our own company." It is interesting to learn that the decorum of the drawing-room was eventually the characteristic of Drury Lane under that distinguished management; of its deficiencies in the Restoration there can be no doubt. There was always the chance of one of those hectoring spirits falling foul of your leading gentleman, as we have seen in the case of Sir Charles Sedley and Mr. Kynaston. Mr. Pepys, too, mentions a rumour "that my Lord Duke of Buckingham had soundly beaten Henry Killigrew at the King's House, and taken away his sword, till the fellow prayed him to spare his life." The pleasantries of the young men in the tiring-room of the actresses, it appears, were so pronounced that it was the custom of the leading ladies to send away their young dressers when the exquisites appeared. You may read of the amenities of the green-room in a score of Mr. Pepys' entries—how Nell Gwynn and Beck Marshall fell out, and told each other a piece of their minds, which nothing shall induce us to set down here. You may see another aspect of the house behind the curtain in that visit of Mr. Pepys to Mr. Harris in 1668 at the Duke's House, "and there I observed much company come to him, and the witts to talk after the play is done, and to assign meetings." Then there was the famous

afternoon when he went with Knipp to the tiring-room or "woman's shift," where Nell was dressing herself, "all unready and is very pretty, prettier than I thought." He prompted Knipp in her part in "Flora's Fagaries," as he spells it, and giving the cues, listened to that vivacious minx as she ran through her speeches. He saw Nell look through the hole in the curtain, and swear terribly at the scanty numbers in the pit. "But to see how Nell cursed for being so few people in the pit was pretty!" and the paint on their faces which wanted none made him "loathe them." "But Lord, their confidence, and how many men do hover about them as soon as they come off the stage, and how confident they are in their talk." We all know that famous passage, but we may search in vain for phrases better to present the green-room of the Restoration theatre, or the attraction that it had for half the audiences of those days, and the consequent troubles which Mr. Colley Cibber deplored.

As time went on, the audience, we believe, grew a little less primitive and more sedate; the humours of the crush for the pit became more distasteful, and means were devised for making a visit to the play easier and more comfortable than it had been. You may find solemn edicts regulating the theatre and its audiences in great collections like the Calendar of State Papers; how King Charles, being "advised that diverse people doe rudely presse, and with evil language and blowes, force their waye into the two theatres without paying the prices

published," his Majesty declared such proceedings unlawful, "notwithstanding their pretended privilege by custom of forcing their entrance at the fourth or fifth act without payment." That "rudely pressing with evil language" seems strangely reminiscent of the days not very long gone by, before the days of the queue at the pit doors. But the audiences of the Restoration, or some members of them, had a way of avoiding the crush. We notice Pepys, on two occasions at least, records the employment of a substitute to hold his seat, a poor man or a boy sent on until the prosperous citizen might enter at his leisure when the house had filled. It soon became a custom, among the people of condition who affected the boxes, to send forward their servants to keep their places, and to display their liveries in the front seats, as one of the prologue writers hints. Shortly before the amalgamation of the two patent companies in 1682, it was weakly conceded to these servants that they might occupy the upper gallery at Drury Lane without charge. From that moment they became a very noisy, and, consequently, a very important part of the audience. "How often," says Mr. Cibber, 'have the most polite audiences, in the most affecting scenes of the best plays, been disturbed and insulted by the noise and clamour of these savage spectators.' Dryden was very severe in one of his epilogues upon the same subject—

"They've grown a nuisance beyond all disasters,
We've none so great, but their unpaying masters ;"

and facetious advertisements on the subject of the servants at the play appeared in the papers. "Dropped near the playhouse in the Haymarket," says one of these in the *Female Tatler* for December 1709, "a bundle of horsewhips, designed to be used about the footmen in the upper gallery, who, almost every night this winter, have made such an intolerable disturbance that the players could not be heard, and their masters were forced to hiss them into silence. Whosoever has taken up the said whips is desired to leave them at my Lord Rake's porter, several noblemen resolving to exercise them on their backs the next frosty morning."

In the *Tatlers* and *Spectators* and *Guardians* of Steele and Addison you will find pictures of the audiences of the playhouses of their day, which are scarcely less vivid than the minute delineations of Mr. Pepys himself, for the speculations of those kindly authors often found a subject in the demeanour of the classes at the play. Steele and Addison were never more happy than in their badinage at the playhouse; we can follow the humours of all parts of the house in their pleasant pages, the whisper running along the row of boxes, the follies of the beaux, the fans and patches of the ladies; we can hear the claque and the cat-call in the gallery, and see the brow-beating and nose-pulling of the ruffians of the pit. We must be careful not to take those delightful authors too literally, for both were masters of the ironic method;

but with that reservation in mind, we can surely have no better companions than they in our search for the true aspect of the theatre of the early part of the last century.

From their speculations we conceive the playhouse to have toned down considerably since the days of Mr. Pepys. There is an air or refinement in the audiences of the times of the *Spectator* which we seem to miss in the pages of the *Diary*—a refinement with a charm all its own, notwithstanding its trivialities at which our authors laugh. What could be prettier than Addison's banter of the Whig and Tory ladies at the play, who wore patches on their faces, "disposed upon party lines," in his account of the Opera at the Haymarket in 1711. It has been quoted by serious historians as literally true; but we do not believe a word of it should be taken literally. Translated in the proper way, it provides us with an excellent picture of the opera of the days of Queen Anne, a picture of handsome women in the boxes, conspicuous by the exhibition of a new and rather silly fashion of spotting their faces with sticking-plaster.

"I noticed," says Mr. Addison, "two parties of very fine women that had placed themselves in the opposite side boxes, and seemed drawn up in a kind of array, one against the other. I found that they were patched differently, the faces on one hand being spotted on the right side of the forehead, and those upon the other on the left. In the middle boxes

were several ladies, who patched indifferently on both sides of their faces. . . . The censorious say that the patches turn to the right or to the left, according to the principles of the man whose heart is aimed at. Some, however, patch for the public good, as much as for their private advantage; and several women of honour do so with an eye to the interest of their country." So it pleases Mr. Addison to banter on: he tells us of Rosalinda, a famous Whig partisan, who had unfortunately a very beautiful mole on the Tory part of her forehead, which misled several coxcombs "to converse in the wrong strain, when on a sudden she has given them an unexpected fire which sunk them all at once." We have Nigranilla, too, "unhappy in a pimple, which forces her against her inclinations to patch on the Whig side."

So too, in that other paper of the same year, the chattering vain woman of Mr. Addison's acquaintance in the box is still a living image, the lady who broke into a loud soliloquy at "Macbeth" before the rising of the curtain, and wondered "when will the dear witches enter," the lady who called to the young baronet in the pit "to ask him whether Macbeth's wife was still alive, and before he could give an answer fell a talking of the ghost of Banquo." We seem to know that lady and those others, the "whisperers who lay their heads together in order to sacrifice everybody within their observation, the laughers who keep up an insipid mirth in their own corner, and it is to be observed

that their impertinence is ever loudest when the set happens to be made up of three or four females who have got what you call a woman's man among them." These are surely types which survive at theatres and elsewhere.

Steele, with his fine eye for women of all ages and conditions, is no less helpful to us in peopling the playhouse of Queen Anne; the honest fellow was never so happy as when gazing at a houseful of ladies placed in gradual rows in all the ornaments of jewels, silks and colours, "which gave so lovely and gay an impression to the heart that methought the season of the year had vanished, and I did not think it an ill expression of a young fellow who stood near to me that called the boxes 'those beds of tulips.'" Dick's impressionable eye catches a fine lady standing up and "did honour to herself and friend at a distance by curtseying, and gave opportunity to that friend to show her charms to the same advantage in returning the salutation," and we seem to see the crowded playhouse waiting for Mr. Cibber and Mrs. Barry to come on in the "Scornful Lady." Dick was often there to report the demeanour of those audiences. "There is a front row of virgins, the young married women in the second, while the rear is generally made up of mothers of long standing, undesigning maids and contented widows. A double entendre strikes the first row with an affected gravity, the second will venture at a smile, but the third take the conceit entirely and express their mirth in a downright

laugh." We see thus the risky joke running round the circle of boxes.

Such are the impressions of the more fashionable parts of the audiences which we gather from a perusal of those inimitable papers, papers which seem to us more eloquent upon our subject than half the dry facts stored in the pages of more formal histories of the stage. But their pleasantry is by no means confined to those modish circles. "Mr. Spectator, I apply myself to you in the following case," wrote James Easy in January of 1712. "I do not wear a sword, but I often divert myself at the theatre where I frequently see a set of fellows pull plain people by way of frolic by the nose upon frivolous or no occasions. A friend of mine the other night applauding what a graceful exit Mr. Wilks made, one of these nose wringers overhearing him pinched him by the nose. I was in the pit the other night when it was very much crowded, a gentleman leaning upon me and very heavily, I requested him to remove his hand, for which he pulled me by the nose." James Easy was a very sober and prosperous linen-draper, by the name of James Heywood, of Fish Street Hill, and Addison very shrewdly allowed his letter to appear in his own language. It is certainly as eloquent of some aspects of the pit as in his own banter of that of the boxes.

Again, what language of the greatest severity could better chastise the dishonest absurdities of the claque than Addison's immortal paper on "The Trunkmaker

in the upper gallery"? The text for that most humorous of all sermons begins the paper. "It has been observed that of late years there has been a certain person in the upper gallery of the playhouse, who, when he is pleased with anything on the stage, expresses his approbation by a loud knock upon the benches or the wainscot which may be heard over the whole house. The person is commonly known by the name of the Trunkmaker in the upper gallery."

It seems to us that since we were shown how Prince Hal and Falstaff both played the King, there have been few more humorous passages written than the variations Mr. Addison develops from this theme. The Trunkmaker was a large black man whom nobody knew, who was never seen to smile, "but upon hearing anything to please him takes up his huge oaken plank and laid it upon the next piece of timber that stood in his way with exceeding vehemence. If the audience does not concur with him, he smites a second time, and if the audience is not yet awakened, looks round him with great wrath, and repeats the blow a third time, which never fails to produce the clap. He is observed to be louder than ordinary every time the ghost in Hamlet appears; he had broken half-a-dozen of oaken planks upon Dogget. When Nicolini first appeared at the opera he had demolished three benches in the fury of his applause; he seldom went away from any tragedy by Shakespeare without leaving the wainscot extremely shattered. The players cheerfully repair at their own cost whatever damages he makes;

they had once a thought of erecting a kind of wooden anvil to make his strokes deep and mellow, but as this might not have been distinguished from the music of the kettle-drums, the project was laid aside." It was a great libel that he was bribed, but he had certainly saved many a good play and brought many a graceful actor into reputation, and the actors valued no applause which had not the sound of the oak plank in it. "His zeal for a good author is indeed outrageous, but his strokes are always just, and his admonitions reasonable." Such is Addison's method of preserving for us the humours of the gallery of his time, and the pleasantries of the practice common in those days, and perhaps since, of employing a paid fugleman to lead the laughter and applause of the house.

The crowding of actors upon the stage by fashionable loungers, which we noticed as a feature of the playhouse of the Restoration, was still known in the days of Anne. The custom increased, indeed, until the good queen issued an edict against it. "I saw," wrote a correspondent of Steele, or perhaps Steele himself, "a very lusty fellow, but withal a sort of beau, who getting into one of the side boxes on the stage before the curtain drew, was disposed to show the audience his activity by leaping over the spikes. He passed from thence to one of the entering doors, where he took snuff with a tolerable good grace, displayed his fine clothes, made two or three feint passes at the curtain with his cane, then faced about

and appeared at t'other door. Here he affected to survey the whole house, bowed and smiled at random, and then showed his teeth, which were indeed, some of them, very white. During the time of acting he appeared frequently in the prince's apartment, made one at the hunting match, and was very forward in the rebellion." (These are all scenes from the play of "Philaster.")

It is almost incredible that audiences should have tolerated the state of things described in this letter, but there is no reason to believe they are exaggerated. By Queen Anne's day the abuse of the public trespassing on the stage had reached such a height that, as we have said, a royal proclamation was issued against it. "Whereas we are informed," said the *Gazette* of November 15, 1711, "that the orders we have already given for the reformation of the stage by not permitting anything to be acted contrary to religion or good manners, have in great measure had their good effect we proposed, and being further desirous of reforming all other indecencies and disorders of the stage, our will and pleasure therefore is, and we do hereby command, that no person of what quality soever shall presume to stand behind the scenes or go upon the stage either before or during the acting of any opera or play, and that no person go into either of our houses for opera or comedy without first paying the established prices for their respective places."

This edict of the queen was very well meant, no

doubt, but it was certainly not seriously enforced, or we should not have seen the stage crowded with spectators in Mr. Hogarth's painting of the scene in Newgate, in act third of "The Beggars' Opera." Here are Walker and Lavinia Fenton and Mrs. Eggleton and Mr. Walker all playing in the midst of a crowd of distinguished spectators. There in the right-hand box is the great Duke of Bolton ogling Vinnie Fenton, whom he will presently remove from the stage and marry, and leave Mr. Rich and the British public without the most charming actress that ever played "Polly." Observe the satyr holding up the curtain above his grace's head and pointing the finger of scorn at his grace, which was Mr. Hogarth's way of suggesting the relations between his grace and Vinnie. In the box with the duke are Major Pounceford and Sir Robert Fagg, and Mr. Rich, the manager, talking to Mr. Cook, the auctioneer, and Mr. Gay, the author. The opposite box is full of other distinguished persons, all portraits, but who interest us less except to show how the spectators crowded the stage in 1727. The picture illustrates the theatre at Lincoln's Inn Fields perfectly, and is, indeed, the only representation of that departed playhouse known to be in existence.

That same play, too, of "The Beggars' Opera," and the hubbub it created, is as good an illustration as need be of the place things theatrical held in the society of those days. The legend of that wonderful opera is the best of all means of recalling the interests and the

fears, the jealousies and the defiances, which revolved about the playhouse of 1728.

When Mr. Gay first showed the manuscript of his "lyric drama," that is, a play with songs in it, with Newgate and its occupants as background and characters, the idea of which he had taken from Dr. Swift, Mr. Pope and the doctor both thought it hopeless. Mr. Congreve was of a doubtful mind, and Mr. Rich, who produced it at Lincoln's Inn, alone had faith in the piece. It proved the greatest success ever known on the stage at that time. The house was crowded with an audience for sixty-three consecutive nights, and Mr. Rich confessed to making £4000 out of it. It made Rich gay and Gay rich, as was said by a humourist of the period, the author drawing a not uncomfortable sum from the proceeds.

There has grown up a vast amount of gossip and chatter about this wonderful production, a play which is not at all exciting to read in these days—apt, indeed, to leave one unmoved. There are pretty simple songs, where the charming Lavinia Fenton declared,

"For on the rope that hangs my dear
Depends poor Polly's life,"

and brought down the house with her pretty face more than with the wit of the song. Mackheath, too, has some humour; and one of the rogue's sayings is alive to-day—

"How happy could I be with either
Were t'other dear charmer away."

But the great attraction of all was the rumour that the scene where Peachum and Lockitt fly at each other's throats was drawn from the life, from a similar encounter, in fact, between the two Secretaries of State, Sir Robert Walpole and Lord Townshend, which was believed to have taken place at his lordship's house in Cleveland Row. Whether there was truth in the rumour is beside the point; the people believed it, and enjoyed the scene very much; and Sir Robert Walpole was sensitive enough to get the Duke of Grafton to forbid the second edition of the play, which Mr. Gay set about preparing, and the whole society of the day, from the court downwards, was convulsed.

There is a very full account of it all in those diverting memoirs by Lord Hervey, the cynical Hervey who sneered at most of what he saw in his day. The Duchess of Queensberry, who was Mr. Gay's kind friend throughout his life, resented the interference of the Government, and put herself at the head of a movement to publish the improved play by subscription. Her grace was at court one day, when King George the Second came into the drawing-room, where her grace had buttonholed three men in a corner to solicit their subscriptions for her favourite. His Majesty condescended to ask her what she did. "What must be agreeable to any one so humane as his Majesty," said the spirited lady, "for it was an act of charity, to which she did not despair of bringing his Majesty to contribute."

And upon this her grace pushes her list for Mr. Gay under the royal nose, and solicits the help of his Majesty for the author of a work which had been suppressed a few days before for lampooning his Majesty's Minister. There is a great fuss, and Mr. Stanhope is sent to say that her grace's presence at court is not thought desirable for the future. Her grace says that for fear of mistakes she will send her answer in writing, and a pretty answer it is when it comes. Its grammar is shaky, but its meaning is unmistakable:—

“The Duchess of Queensberry is surprised and well pleased that the king has given her so agreeable a command as forbidding her to court, where she never came for diversion, but to bestow a great civility on the king and queen. She hopes that by so unprecedented an order as this, the king will see as few as he wishes at court, particularly such as dare to think or speak the truth. I dare not do otherwise, and ought not nor could I have imagined but that it would have been the highest compliment I could possibly pay the king and queen to support truth and innocence in their house.

C. QUEENSBERRY.

“P.S.—Particularly when the king and queen told me they had not read Mr. Gay's play. I have certainly done them right to justify my own behaviour rather than act like his grace of —, who has neither made use of truth, honour, nor judgment in this whole affair, either for himself or his friends.”

Such were the results which could grow out of an incident at the play in 1728, and we do not doubt in the least that the possibility of such developments made the theatre a much more amusing place than it is to-day.

The audiences of those days, indeed, were never long

without a sensation. There was the facetious Duke of Montague for instance, who provided the town with a nine days' wonder at the Haymarket Theatre in January of 1749. He advertised in an assumed name that he would "this evening at the Haymarket play on a common walking cane the musick of several instruments now used, to surprising perfection, and that he would on the stage get into a tavern quart bottle without equivocation, and there sing several songs, and suffer any spectator to handle the bottle, and that if any spectator would come masked, he would, if requested, declare who they were, and that in a private room he would produce the representation of any person dead, with which the person requesting it should converse some minutes as if alive. Gallery, 2s.; Pit, 3s.; Boxes, 5s.; Stage, 7s. 6d."

It seems strange that the theatre could have been let for such preposterous fooling, or that there were enough people to fill the theatre, with the Duke of Cumberland at their head, on that January afternoon of 1749. The meeting thus inaugurated took place, however, and has been famous ever since as the "Bottle Hoax."

The audience sat till long after the hour announced for the performance, without music and without the appearance of any actor or manager. It is easy to imagine the behaviour of the house, of whom, certainly, not one believed in the miracle they professed to be waiting to see; they were there, of course, merely for the fun and excitement of the inevitable riot. Reports of the banging of canes, stamping of

feet, and cat-calls still survive in various accounts of the proceedings; but we take these manifestations to be a very small part of the demonstrations, which at length produced a man in front of the curtain. This devoted servant of the duke announced that if, as he feared, there might be no performance, the money would be returned. On the other hand, a wag in the pit announced: "If ladies and gentlemen will pay double, the conjuror will get into a pint bottle," at which pleasantry the house laughed derisively. Then a young man of fashion arose, calmly lighted a candle, and threw it on the stage, which was a very plain hint for an attack upon the structure of the house. A Scotch lady, who may have been present, but was certainly inspired by the orthodox Jacobite hatred of Butcher Cumberland, who was not long back from his dragooning of the Highlanders, declares that the prince was "the first that flew in a rage, and called to pull down the house; he pulled his sword, and was in such a rage that somebody slipped in behind him, and pulled the sword out of his hand." However that may have been, there was a glorious and not unnatural riot. The greater part of the audience escaped from the theatre to wait events outside, "some losing a cloak, others a hat, others hat, wig, and sword also." A smaller and more active minority remained inside, and devoted their attention to the furniture and the decorations of the house. They tore up the benches, broke to pieces the scenes—in short, demolished the theatre entirely, "carrying away

the pieces into the street, where they made a mighty bonfire, the curtain being hoisted in the middle by way of flag," before the guards could arrive to prevent them, and no very great blame to them we think.

It was these endless possibilities of diversion of the early playhouses, apart altogether from the regular performances, which made, as we believe, a visit to the theatre a more exciting undertaking then than in later and more decorous times. You never knew what might happen. There might be a quaint surprise for his Majesty in the royal box, as when a cupid descended from the roof and presented King George the First with a programme of the play, with which conceit his Majesty was much pleased. Then you might watch King George the Second looking with greedy eyes at the pretty actress playing the intriguing chambermaid, until she turned upon the old man in the piece with the words, "You are villainously old ; you are sixty-six, and cannot have the impudence to think of living above two years." At this you would see his Majesty in the box, who was getting old himself, turn his back to the stage, and say in a voice heard all over the house, "This is damned stuff." Playgoers of those times could speculate upon the family quarrels at St. James's which kept his Majesty at Drury Lane and his royal highness, Prince Frederick of Wales, at the Lincoln's Inn establishment, and note that if a courtier of either court appeared at the opposition house, he lost his place forthwith.

THE PLAY AND THE OPERA 245

There were these and many other diversions to be met with in the playhouses of the past which seem sadly lacking in those of to-day, though we hope that we receive due compensation in the ability of our players over Quin and Macklin, Wilkes, Nance Oldfield, and Peg Woffington. If we are to believe Colley Cibber, it was no uncommon thing to see a disappointed swain of some pretty actress rise in the pit when she came on, interrupt her "by loud and various notes of mockery," and pelt her with rubbish which he had brought in his pocket for the purpose. Then there were endless possibilities of excitement when the pit was supreme, and, lacking its favourite actor or actress, or sore at some edict of the Lord Chamberlain, with any grievance indeed, real or fancied, in its mind, requested the ladies of the audience to withdraw, an omen significant of much; "overthrew the candles, called a council of war, and debated whether they should attack the harpsichord or not." The pit when roused, it seems, always attacked that instrument. They were also accustomed to send for drink, and deliberate over other methods of ventilating their grievances. Madame Chateaufort failed to appear at Drury Lane in 1740. The ladies were sent home, and a nobleman of the rank of marquess, as we read, suggested that the proper course for the outraged audience to adopt, as it appeared to his lordship, was to fire the house. The proposal was gravely considered, but rejected as too severe a punishment for the non-appearance of the danseuse. They felt the

justice of the case would be met by smashing the instruments of the orchestra, from the fife to the big drum, eviscerating the boxes, and demolishing the Royal Arms, and these disciplinary measures they accordingly proceeded to carry out.

Then there were other great possibilities in the continued presence of the audience on the stage. Queen Anne's edict either failed altogether, or was successfully evaded for years after its issue. There was often a double row of spectators seated round the stage; nearly always a group of young men at the wings among the players. In 1721 there was a gang of a dozen or more, including a man of title. Macbeth and his wife were about to begin the murder scene, when his lordship strolled over the stage to speak to a companion at the opposite wing. Mr. Rich, the manager, was standing there too, and told the peer he should never be admitted again. His lordship slapped Mr. Rich's face, Mr. Rich smacked his lordship's in return. There were half-a-dozen swords out in a moment, and the audience were about to witness a stage fight with an uncommon dash of reality in it. Up rushed Mr. Quin, Mr. Ryan, and Mr. Walker with their swords out, and drove the beaux off the stage and into the pit. The beaux clambered up into the boxes, cleared out the partitions and sconces, and slashed the curtains, until Mr. Quin and his watchmen and constables cleared them out, and haled half-a-dozen before the magistrate. They had to close the theatre for a week, and the king was

so angry that he ordered a guard of soldiers at the patent theatres, and there they remained until quite recent times as a memorial of the battle of the beaux with Mr. Quin and Mr. Rich in 1721.

Those guards were objects of interest for a century. At one time it was fashionable with the gallery to pelt them, until a few of the pelters were immured in the gatehouse prison. Later, one of the poor fellows was so amused at the impersonation of Sir Andrew Aguecheek that he laughed himself into convulsions. Mr. Garrick, in tragedy, so touched the heart of another of these warriors, that he fainted, whereupon Mr. Garrick sent for him behind the scenes after the play and obligingly presented him with a guinea. It is reported that on the following evening his comrade in arms on the opposite side of the stage dropped as in a swoon, but that on this occasion there was no guinea forthcoming from Mr. Garrick, and thereafter the guard contrived to smother the feelings inspired by the acting of that great man.

We wrote in a former page of the weak concession which gave a sort of prescriptive right to the footmen of the quality to the seats in the gallery at Drury Lane. It is astonishing that none of the able managers of those early years should have thought of the simple expedient of selling tickets for reserved places, instead of encouraging the footmen to take their seats by the side of early arrivals in the boxes, and play put and all-fours until their masters appeared, and they went upstairs to claim their places

in the gallery. The managers of later times paid dearly for that concession, and the behaviour of these people was a standing grievance with the management and the audiences for years. Colley Cibber declares that the original privilege was a jealous move of Christopher Rich, who, deploring the popularity of the actors and the pieces they played at the Duke's House, admitted the footmen of the quality to Drury Lane, as a bribe which might incite them "to come all hands aloft in the crack of our applauses." Mr. Rich's aspiration conveyed in this cryptic sentence seems to have been fulfilled to the letter. "But, Sir," said the typical footman in the *Spectator*, "I am a leader of the servants. I am he that keeps time with beating my cudgel against the boards of the gallery at an opera; I am he that am touched so properly at a tragedy when the people of quality are staring at one another during the most important incidents; when you hear in the crowd a cry at the right place, a hum where the point is touched in a speech, or a huzza set up where it is the voice of the people, you may conclude it is begun or joined, Sir, by your more than humble servant, Thomas Trusty."

There were other aspects than these of the double row of plush breeches in the gallery, and Drury Lane at last screwed up its courage to get rid of what Mr. Cibber described as "the most disgraceful nuisance that ever depreciated the theatre." In 1737 the footmen were incontinently turned away from the gallery doors. There is a quite humorous account of what followed

in *Mist's Weekly Journal* for March the 12th of the same year. "The footmen and other lively servants attending the nobility and gentry in Drury Lane, having on account of their vociferations during the acts as well as the intervals been expelled the upper gallery of the house in which they and their ancestors had sat and voted in all affairs that came upon the stage time immemorial . . . to the end that posterity might see that they were not wanting to vindicate the honour of their cloth, and maintain the whole body of the livery in the full and free enjoyment of their ancient rights and privileges, on Saturday night a great number of them provided with staves and truncheons assembled at the door of the said theatre."

The outraged footmen attended on the Saturday night performance, which by 1737 had become the most fashionable evening at the play, and in a great body overpowered the attendants and overran the stage, while a second party of them forced their way and took possession of the gallery. Twenty-five persons, it is stated, were injured in the affray that followed. A magistrate in the house, Mr. Justice de Viel, recognising the serious nature of the disturbance, got up and read the Riot Act. Frederick Prince of Wales and his princess were there, and a vast number of the persons of rank and fashion of the town as well, but withdrew with the rest of the audience and left Colonel de Viel, supported by foot-guards and the management of the theatre, to deal with the rebellious footmen. Eighteen

were lodged in Newgate as a result. "The Welch footmen are said to have been the most contumacious in the affair," says Mr. Mist's scribe, "after mature consideration at the Goat and Harp alehouse." The incident, however, put an end to the tyranny of the footmen in the gallery, though the trouble only died away entirely after the men of plush had tried intimidation by dropping threatening circulars down the areas of the houses of all those whom they held to be opposed to the restoration of their privileges.

As the eighteenth century ran on into its middle years the number of theatres in London was slightly increased, and the opportunities of playgoers proportionately widened. There was a theatre at Goodman's Fields in Whitechapel which opened at intervals after 1729, and here in October of 1741, West End audiences had the wit to discover Mr. Garrick playing "Richard the Third" and to recognise his genius on the instant. The present Haymarket Theatre stands on a site immediately adjoining that of "the little theatre in the Haymarket," built in 1720. Early managers of the "little theatre," notably Mr. Henry Fielding, were much oppressed by the patentees of the old houses, though the house might be reckoned as one of the regular theatres of the town long before Mr. Foote obtained a licence for a "summer season" from May to September, as a solace for the accident of a broken leg which he had suffered in the company of a group of influential fashionables. Under Foote's management the Haymarket had great attractions

for modish London, the attraction of seeing its own neighbours gibbeted in one or other of the performances of that actor. Then there was a distinct gain to theatrical London in the substitution of Covent Garden Theatre for the old house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, a change which resulted in the migration westward of the company which represented the old patent which the Duke of York had granted to Davenant. There was a droll story told concerning the closing of the Lincoln's Inn Theatre in 1732 which was no doubt religiously accepted by those good people who saw warnings in earthquakes against the iniquities of stage plays. The last piece performed was, it was said, "Harlequin and Dr. Faustus," and the company included a whole troupe of stage fiends. When the final performance was over, and the time came for the payment and dispersal of the company, there remained over "a supernumerary demon," the real article presumably, for he asked no wages but "flew up to the ceiling, made his way through the tiling and tore away one-fourth of the house." This was surely a good reason for closing the rest of the edifice.

But the greatest addition to the amusement of fashionable London of the eighteenth century was the development of opera at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, the house which was removed but a few years ago, and the site of which is now occupied by the Carlton Hotel and Mr. Tree's new theatre. Like some other of the theatres of London, it had its origin in the competition of the two patent companies.

In the early years of the century Vanbrugh and Congreve projected the theatre with the idea of providing a house where Betterton might act the plays which they proposed to write, in order to compete with the more prosperous King's Company at Drury Lane. The theatre was built by subscription, and was opened in 1705. It was then found that the size and architectural deficiencies of the house rendered it totally unfit for theatrical performances. A little later, opera suggested itself as a means of filling the new house, and the addition of opera to the other diversions of Londoners may, perhaps, be traced to the miscalculations of Mr. Congreve and Sir John Vanbrugh.

The new opera, as was only natural, encountered much opposition from the purely theatrical interest, and its early deficiencies were the subject of some merriment, and were perhaps fair game for the wits like Mr. Addison and Sir Richard Steele. The stage illusion, which is necessary in some measure to all performances of the kind, must surely have been wanting in a company where a leading singer from Italy warbled his part in his own mellifluous tongue, and his colleagues supported him in their own native English. Steele and Addison delighted in contrasting the productions at the Haymarket with those of the enterprising Mr. Powell, the puppet showman in the Piazza at Covent Garden, and always to that gentleman's advantage. "Those are the leading diversions of the town," said Steele in 1709, "and Powell has

set up 'Whittington and his Cat' against 'Rinaldo and Armida.' At the opera the King of Jerusalem is obliged to come from the city on foot, instead of being drawn in a triumphant chariot with white horses, as my opera-book had promised me, and he had a very short allowance of thunder and lightning, though I cannot in this place omit doing justice to the boy who had the direction of the painted dragons, and made them spit fire and smoke. He flashed in his rosin in such just proportions and in such due time that I could not forbear conceiving hopes of his being one day a most excellent player, if, indeed, he would only keep his head a little lower and hide his candle." Then when live animals were introduced at the Haymarket and at Mr. Powell's "motions," the advantage still rested with the latter. "The sparrows and chaffinches at the Haymarket as yet fly very irregularly over the stage, and instead of perching on the trees and performing their parts, these young actors either get into the galleries or put out the candles, whereas Mr. Powell has so well disciplined his pig that he and Punch dance a minuet together." At the puppet show "the scenes were managed very dextrously," whereas at the opera "we were presented with a prospect of the ocean in the midst of a delightful grove, and though the gentlemen on the stage had very much contributed to the beauty of the grove by walking up and down between the trees, I must own I was not a little astonished to see a well-dressed young fellow in a full-bottomed wig appear in the

midst of the sea, and without any visible concern taking snuff."

All this is excellent fooling, but it is fair to remember that some of Mr. Addison's reflections on the subject of opera may have been tinged with a pessimism born of his own failure in the same walk of art.

Opera was not long in emerging from its uneasy circumstances. King George the First patronised it, and gave a subscription of £1000, as well as his own name, to the Opera House, and from those early days opera and its attendant interests, the personalities of its singers and their rivalries, became, and long remained, the plaything of aristocratic London. Even in those times of social exclusiveness it was not reckoned undignified for a man of great family to identify himself with the management of opera as a means of increasing his income—there is mention of at least two such during the last century. Horace Walpole touched lightly upon Lord Middlesex's connection with the business in 1747 in one of those pleasant paragraphs of his. "Lord Middlesex," he says, "from his excellent economy in never paying the performers is likely to continue in the treasury." We see, too, in our chapter on the masked assembly, how fatal Mrs. Cornelys' interference with Mr. Hobart, Lord Buckinghamshire's brother, was to that hapless lady.

Fashionable London was so fond of opera in 1735 that it paid £5000 a year to Farinelli, and when that incomparable singer was at the Haymarket an enthu-

siastic lady in the boxes was heard to exclaim in her ecstasy, "One God, one Farinelli." Then singers and their competing merits were a continual joy to generations of noble patrons, and their preferences for one singer or another often inspired ladies of high fashion with very unfashionable feelings. Thus when the rival warblers Cuzzoni and Faustina were appearing at the opera in 1726, they each had a party of thick and thin supporters in distinguished circles. There was the Countess of Pembroke at the head of her party in a box, who was prepared to go all lengths for Cuzzoni; the Countess of Burlington and Lady Delawarr, with their train of young men in another, were fierce and determined on behalf of the Faustina. So when Cuzzoni came on the noble faction which supported Faustina hissed her into silence, when Faustina appeared she was shrieked off the stage by the devoted band at the back of my Lady Pembroke. It was a pretty incident and eloquent of the varieties of diversion to be found at the opera of George the First, an incident too which developed into a faction fight and ended in the closing of the house for a fortnight.

Such incidents as these are significant of the place opera assumed among the amusements of the town, and from the times of George the First until our own, we may think of the Opera House as one of the chief places of social resort in London. That was a typical social afternoon at the opera, for instance, in May of 1744, when the news came out that Mr.

Henry Fox had married Lady Caroline Lennox, the daughter of the Duke of Richmond, secretly and in defiance of her parents. Mr. Fox had prevailed on the young lady to go with him to the house of his friend Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, who had provided a parson in readiness, and there the knot was tied. The spirit of the young lady may be realised when we read that she had shaved off her eyebrows in order to make herself unpresentable to the other young gentleman whom her father and mother had provided in place of Mr. Fox. The news first reached fashionable London at the opera, and Williams was there himself to report it all to the young couple. The ducal family was of such very high standing that the marriage was reckoned a sad *mésalliance*, and it convulsed society for a season. "I saw the news of your marriage," wrote Williams, "run round the boxes like fire in a train of gunpowder." The performance of the Frasi was forgotten, the ladies leant across the partitions and whispered the news behind their fans, and the whole house in a few minutes was divided into two factions—of those who sympathised with the spirit of the young people, and those who deplored the troubles of the duke and duchess. It was whispered "that the rage of the duke and duchess was very high," that their great ball which had been arranged, and for which the town was waiting, had been countermanded, and that their graces had set out in dudgeon for Goodwood, and had issued a ducal ban upon all visitors to

the offending daughter. Young Mr. Horace Walpole, hearing of this, walked round to Williams's box to know the earliest moment he might be allowed to call to pay his respects to the lady, a proceeding as characteristic of Mr. Walpole as is the whole incident characteristic of a typical audience at the opera of the time of George the Second.

Turning again to the theatre, no one looking through the annals of the stage since the middle of the last century can fail to be struck with the importance of the position which was gradually assumed by the audiences in their relations with the management. With the continual increase of the town and of the interest which the people began to take in public affairs, came the feeling that the exercise of a monopoly in theatrical matters imposed corresponding duties upon managers, and implied rights of audiences which had been too long ignored. From the times of the Restoration until the end of the reign of Queen Anne the humbler portions of the house had been made the butt for the facetious shafts of the epilogue writers, Mr. Dryden and the rest, who were wont to make merry over the dulness of their wits, the poverty of their domestic establishments, even of their personal appearance. But by the middle of the reign of George the Second the pit and gallery and the management were on a different footing altogether. The people, perhaps, first effectually asserted themselves in theatrical matters after the Licensing Act of 1737, when they determined to damn the first play which appeared

under the auspices of the Lord Chamberlain, and they did so accordingly, much to the punishment of the author, Mr. Hildebrand Jacob, the quality of whose work was in no way taken into account. Even earlier than that year you may find in advertisements and announcements evidence that audiences as a whole began to receive greater consideration than formerly. There is quite a strange ring about the announcement from the Haymarket in 1735, for example, that "the company will continue to act as long as they shall deserve the favour of the town." Later the audiences began to assert their right to a voice in the very choosing of the piece. In 1755 Mr. Garrick found that unless he himself appeared every night he had great difficulty in filling Drury Lane, and as he felt himself unequal to the continued strain of nightly appearances, he produced, at great expense, the Chinese Festival, a ballet pantomime of a type then new but familiar since, which included a troupe of French dancers. War having in the meantime broken out between England and France, the Drury Lane audience would have none of the French dancers. At the first performance they intimated their objections with great candour from the pit, much to the amusement of His Majesty King George, who laughed at the tumult from the royal box. This produced some hissing against his Majesty and his dynasty, and his Majesty's approval of the piece had the effect of further increasing the trouble by ranging the fashion of the boxes on the side of his Majesty and Mr. Garrick.

That gentleman, anxious about the great expenses already incurred, was ill advised enough to repeat the performance, and by so doing managed to produce a riot of the first dimensions. After an exchange of defiance between the pit and the boxes, the gentlemen left their ladies, leaped gallantly into the pit, and drew their swords upon the citizens, the gallery meanwhile bombarding both parties with any missiles they found to hand, with great impartiality. The beaux, however, were soon overpowered, and the citizens having first smashed the harpsichord, proceeded to break up all the furniture of the house. They invaded the stage and reduced the elaborate scenery of the Chinese Festival to the merest ribbons. Still unappeased, they went on to Mr. Garrick's house in Southampton Street, and further asserted their right of interference by smashing his windows from basement to garret.

It was seldom, indeed, that actor or manager found any opposition to the clearly expressed wish of the house of the slightest use. There were greatly daring individuals who occasionally tried falls with angry houses, but always with indifferent success. Mrs. Siddons was once heard to say to a howling gallery, "Adieu, you brutes;" but we believe the noise going on at the moment prevented more than her companions on the stage from catching the remark. Another lady was momentarily successful in the face of a hostile audience, but her show of high spirit prevented her from ever appearing on the same stage

again. Mrs. Montague was cast for Queen Eleanor in Hull's play of "Henry II.," but wishing for the more attractive part of Rosomond, given to Mrs. Hudson, turned sulky, pleaded illness as an excuse for not studying the part, and when the first night came, she sent an actor to explain to the audience that she intended to read her part. It was then suggested that she had better explain matters herself. With the book in her hand, and the saucy expression, "Who's afraid?" on her lips, she rushed on the stage. There she defiantly informed the pit that she *would* read the part, as she had had no time to study it. There was a roar of menace from the house, and some one shouted that they would rather have the cook-maid from the alehouse to read than Mrs. Montague. "Then," said that lady, "curse you all," flung the book of the play into the middle of the pit, and swept off the stage.

The eccentric George Frederic Cooke, too, was once called upon to apologise to a Liverpool audience for some slip or other. "What," he cried in derision, "an apology from George Frederic Cooke!" and continued, in pleasant allusion to Liverpool's connection with the slave trade, "There's not a brick in your infernal dirty town which is not cemented with the blood of a slave."

Nearly all the managers of the last century were fortunate in the patronage extended to them by royalty, and could usually reckon, during the reigns of the first three Georges at least, upon the great

THE PLAY AND THE OPERA 261

attraction for the ordinary playgoer of the presence of some member of the reigning house in the royal box. Acting was the only art which George the First even pretended to admire; he was very fond of ordering the King's company down to Hampton Court, and understood and enjoyed the political allusions of such plays as "Henry the Eighth," which he was careful to explain to the Prince of Wales. George the Second enjoyed the play hugely, and was never so happy as when watching a piece of the Restoration, with all its indelicacies restored to the acting version by his own royal command. The audiences of George the Third had the satisfaction of his Majesty's presence on very frequent occasions, but always to witness plays of the greatest innocence. It must have been very cheerful to hear his Majesty's hilarity ring round the house at the smallest joke; we know he would laugh himself almost into apoplexy when the clown in the pantomime stole the goose or sat on the baby. He was so easily pleased, that the actors sometimes made "gag" for his especial benefit. They would make sly jokes at his Majesty's agricultural pursuits, and his Majesty would take the point with delight, and chuckle from the royal box, "Hee, hee; good, they mean my sheep." Then when they played the "Siege of Calais," where there is a scene between two carpenters who have made the scaffold for the execution; and a line, "So the king is coming, and the king like not my scaffold, I am no true man," Mr. Parsons, who was playing the chief carpenter, went close up to the

royal box, and delivered an altered version in the words, "An the king were here, and did not admire my scaffold, I would say, damn him, he has no taste;" and the king laughed louder than the house at the poor and impudent jest. The audiences of George the Third, too, were accustomed to find some amusement in the pieces commanded by the royal family on different occasions. Thus when the Duke of Gloucester appeared at the play with his duchess, Horry Walpole's niece, the widow Waldegrave, whom he had married in defiance of the Court, he commanded the piece "Jane Shore," as who should hint at the dangers of any but regular connections between royalty and its ladies. Then, too, only a week or so after the death of the Duke of Cumberland, with whom he was not on the best of terms, King George commanded "Much Ado About Nothing," to the great amusement of the waggish among his subjects.

But the occasion of all others in which the king appeared to the best advantage in the playhouse, was on that 5th of May 1800, when Hatfield fired at him from the pit; and the brave king, after seeing that the queen and princesses were unhurt, quieted the fears of the Court Chamberlain who urged him to withdraw. "Sir, you discompose me as well as yourself," said his Majesty; "I shall not stir a step," and he continued to look round the house with his single opera-glass, and all his subjects were delighted, for bravery never goes out of fashion.

It is conjectured by enthusiasts of the drama, that

when Mr. Garrick flashed on the stage in 1741, and swept away in a breath all the antiquated and pompous conventions which had almost strangled the art of the stage since the days of Betterton,—the mouthings and attitudes and sing-song recitatives in vogue with the masters of the professions,—he had not only to exhibit a new art, but to create new audiences. There must have been many playgoers who were unable in a moment to part with the old traditions without a struggle, or were prepared to accept all at once the genius of the acting of the little man from the East End Theatre at Goodman's Fields. But how complete that education must have become before Mr. Garrick said farewell at Drury Lane in 1776, is obvious from the accounts of that farewell which have survived. The agreeable gossip, Mr. Harry Angelo, was there himself with his mother and Mrs. Garrick in the same box, and tells us all about it. "I remember," he says, "that more tears were shed when he had finished this touching part, and the curtain dropped, than he had ever excited, perhaps, mighty as his command might be over the passions of his audience, when acting a character in the most affecting tragedy." There is nothing at all suggestive of a theatrical performance in the accounts of that mournful occasion. People were heard sobbing after they had quitted the theatre, and the solemnity of the whole function was hardly exceeded when, ten years later, the male fashion of the day turned out from White's and Brooks's to follow the great player to

Westminster Abbey. That farewell at Drury Lane of Mr. Garrick's was a notable day in the annals of the theatre; a great artist's life-work accomplished, the most popular of the arts transformed by his genius, which had created new standards and new ideals, and a vast London audience acknowledging the fact with tears and lamentations.

And yet, the elevation which Garrick gave to the stage and its audiences notwithstanding, a spectacle or a sensation with a personal interest, like David's own farewell, for example, were ever the occasions which drew the crowded houses. From very early days it was the custom of managers of the patent theatres in lack of an attraction to admit all sorts of strange exhibitions to the stage, either as separate shows before the piece, or between the acts—acrobats and contortionists, cudgel players, hornpipe dancers, and the like. In 1736 the managers of Lincoln's Inn Theatre advertised that Mrs. Mapp, the famous bone-setter and quack doctress, would be present at the performance of "The Husband's Relief," and all London flocked to see that lady sitting serenely in a box, while the comic man of the piece came on and sang a song in her honour to the tune of "Derry Down," in which he derided the faculty, and declared that "the doctress of Epsom has out-done you all." Later, too, the management of the same house secured the attendance of "four Indian kings," these potentates being, as a fact, four Red Indian chiefs then on a visit to England. Their

attendance was advertised, and the house was crammed to meet them. They sat in the centre box, and were thus invisible to the gallery. The gallery, not being able to see the kings, became riotous, and refused to allow "Macbeth" to proceed. Then Mr. Wilks came forward to assure the gallery that the kings were really in the house though they might not be visible to all parts of it. The gallery replied that it paid its money to see the kings, and meant to see them. After much negotiation the Indians were persuaded to go down to the stage, where, being provided with chairs, they sat out the performance.

That same perennial love of sensation has inspired half the audiences who have flocked to make the great occasions of the theatre. It was no mere love of fine acting which took all fashionable London to Covent Garden at ten in the morning on the 1st of December 1804, in order to be in time for the evening performance of *Master Betty*, the *Infant Roscius*. It is amazing to read the account of the sufferings of the audience who assembled to greet that prodigy. "Gentlemen who knew that there were no places untaken in the boxes and could not get up the pit avenues, paid for admission into the lower boxes, and poured from them into the pit in twenties and thirties at a time. . . . The ladies in one or two boxes were occupied almost the whole night in fanning the gentlemen who were beneath them in the pit. . . . Upwards of twenty gentlemen who had

fainted were dragged up into the boxes ; several more raised their hands as if in supplication for mercy and pity." Is it not touching, and all this tribulation only to hear a young gentleman of fourteen play Selim in "Barbarossa"? The ingenuous British public never gave Garrick or Mrs. Siddons or John Kemble such a reception. One reads with wonder that the House of Commons adjourned on the motion of the austere Mr. Pitt, so that the legislators, having nothing better to think about in those times of Wellington and Napoleon, might have an opportunity of seeing the infant phenomenon. It is with satisfaction that one learns that Mrs. Siddons was too careful of the dignity of her art to play with the young gentleman, as was obligingly suggested to that lady.

It is not uninteresting in these days of a London of multitudinous playhouses to reflect that, until the Act of 1843 established free trade in theatres, the theatrical amusements of the town were still purveyed, nominally at any rate, under the old patents of Charles the Second, with the addition of the quasi accidental patent of the Haymarket and the aristocratic management of the opera at Her Majesty's. Such other theatres as opened their doors did so either on sufferance, by disguising their productions as burlettas or musical entertainments, or at the very imminent risk of being pounced upon by one of the patent managements. Licences of a temporary character were granted to some of these as time went on—to the Lyceum, for example, the Sanspareil, now the Adelphi, the

Olympic, and others. But in the main the monopolies of Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the Haymarket were still acknowledged, though only with the increasing reluctance of an increasing body of playgoers. But the last quarter of the last century and the first of this had seen a change and development in matters theatrical. Mr. Sheridan's imaginative finance, which had succeeded the thrifty management of Mr. Garrick at Drury Lane, had introduced many other interests than his own in the fortunes of that famous house, and eventually resulted in a management where the public were to some extent represented by a body of distinguished amateurs, of which Lord Byron was one. Then, whenever a theatre was altered or rebuilt, there was a constant effort on the part of the managers to enlarge their houses, to increase the numbers of private boxes, and banish more humble members of the audience to bad accommodation, where hearing and seeing were both difficult, changes followed always by great popular discontent.

We imagine that the claims of aggrieved members of the theatre-going public to a voice in the management, which we have already noticed in its early development, found loudest expression in the Old Price Riots at Covent Garden in 1809. These riots were the direct result of the feelings of grievance and resentment among the occupants of pit and gallery at the treatment we have mentioned as usual whenever a theatre was rebuilt or remodelled. Mr. Kemble, in rebuilding Covent Garden after the

great fire, proposed, among other changes, to add many new private boxes at the expense of the cheaper places of the house, and to raise the prices of seats in the pit by sixpence. He succeeded only in raising an agitation which filled his house with tumult night after night for exactly three months.

It was computed that for seventy-one nights, between the 18th September and the 16th December, no performance was possible on account of the uproar. The invention of new noises for Covent Garden became a fine art. One gentleman took a watchman's rattle, which he sprung from a private box at propitious moments; another occupied the centre of the pit with a large dustman's bell. Drums, horns, cat-calls, and bugles were the arms, so to speak, of the rank and file, while some of the more inventive geniuses of the opposition contrived to introduce live porkers into the theatre, their ears being pinched at proper intervals when a variation in the harmony was required. There was a regular performance called the O. P. Dance, which consisted, apparently, of a simultaneous and measured trampings of the feet all over the house. It was impossible to hear a word a few feet from the stage, and as soon as the curtain rose the audience turned their backs to the performers and devoted themselves to the diversions of the house. Any attempt at the arrest of individuals always led to a free fight, and the magistrates had little to do for three months but to settle disputes arising from the O. P. diversions at Covent Garden. The noise became

so constant that it was a recognised thing, and communications passed between the two parties by means of large placards displayed by either side. Grave commercial potentates like the Governor of the Bank of England were called in as arbitrators, and declared that the enterprise would only show a profit of three per cent. on the capital outlay on the new theatre at the new prices, and that at the old rates there would be a loss of three-quarters per cent. per annum. The audience replied that it was not their fault if fancy salaries were paid to foreign actresses, or that the managers had neglected to insure the late theatre at more than a third of its value. Recognising, too, at that early period, the essential principles of free trade, they remarked, that if the monopoly of the patent theatres were ended, the managers might charge what they liked for their seats, and filch as many boxes from the pit as they chose, because the public could then go elsewhere for their diversion. After three months of this strife Mr. Kemble had to surrender, to withdraw all charges in the police courts, and to make an apology, and thus the right of the public to interfere in matters of administration was at last acknowledged and confirmed.

It is not uninteresting to note that almost at the moment when the popular element was asserting itself in the theatre all the fashion of London was engaged in concentrating itself at the opera. Just after the present century opened, there was a cult of deportment which developed in social London, and consti-

tuted a tyranny under which society groaned for a couple of generations. Beau Brummell and his set at the clubs in St. James's Street represented the male element of this autocracy of fashion, the lady patronesses at Almack's in King Street the feminine; and at the opera they both united their forces. The writers of the lighter memoirs of the period, Gronow, Grantley, Berkeley, and Lord Lamington, who, however, describes the antics of a later decade, are eloquent about the glories of the quality at the opera in those earlier years. There was the peerless Mr. Brummell, with his satellite exquisites in Fop's Alley, the interest of the whole mankind of the house, we are asked to believe, centred in the question of his raiment for the evening, echoed in the general remark, "How well got up is Brummell." The ladies of the grand tier, we are told, including the chaperons, were more anxious for his notice than for that of the Prince Regent. The opera, in fact, like Almack's, was a social function which entirely outclassed anything of the sort at Court after the retirement of the poor blind King George the Third. There was no question of getting in by the mere payment of money, a committee of ladies supervised the issue of every ticket, and a man or a lady went to the opera or did not, according as their social position was or was not considered worthy of that honour by the Lady Patronesses. Once there they had the pleasure of gazing upon those women whose beauty has inspired so many social writers to ecstasy—Lady Harrowby and her daughter,

Lady Mary Ryder, the Duchess of Argyll and the Ladies Campbell, Lady Stafford and Lady Elizabeth Gower, Mme. de Lieven, Princess Esterhazy, Lady Cardigan, and the rest. The performance did not matter in the least, as it would seem, for it is seldom mentioned in those panegyrics. The chief of the dandies displayed their graces with as much thought as the ladies—Mr. George Damer, Lord Foley, Mr. Henry Pierrepont, Mr. Wellesley Pole, Mr. Charles Standish, Mr. Drummond, the old Sleeping Beauty Lumley Skeffington, and the others. It is very curious in these irreverent days to read the awe-struck frame of mind with which all this fine company was regarded, even by people who profess to have been in it. The Lady Patronesses who controlled London society from the time of the Regency until her Majesty came to the throne were accustomed to sit in conclave upon all the young men about to enter life, and decide as to whether or not they were eligible for admission to such stately functions as Almack's and the opera. "Only sixteen officers of the Guards were found worthy of that honour," as we are assured, and the whole circle of the elect of London society, even so late as 1840, did not exceed six hundred, according to Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, whose lady was one of its leaders. It was in the hands of this small coterie of people that the opera, as a fashionable institution, attained its natural development; on its first introduction into England, as we have seen, it soon became the plaything of an aristocracy, and it

has remained so since. The support of the general public in the cheaper portions of the house is, no doubt, of greater importance now than formerly, but, after nearly two centuries, opera in England is still as dependent upon the support of a small and rich class as it was when Lady Delawarr and Lady Pembroke quarrelled about the respective merits of the Cuzzoni and the Faustina, or when the Lady Patronesses of George the Fourth were so careful in filtering its audiences.

It is at that point that we propose to take leave of our subject, the play and the opera as amusements of the people of London. Audiences since those times have displayed no very distinctive features, and the playhouse of the Regency differs little from that of Queen Victoria. The great event in theatrical matters of the present century was the abolishment of the exclusive rights of the patent theatres by the Act of 1843, a change which had been long foreshadowed, and resulted in the generous provision in the matter of theatres which we know and appreciate in these days.

END OF VOL. I

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